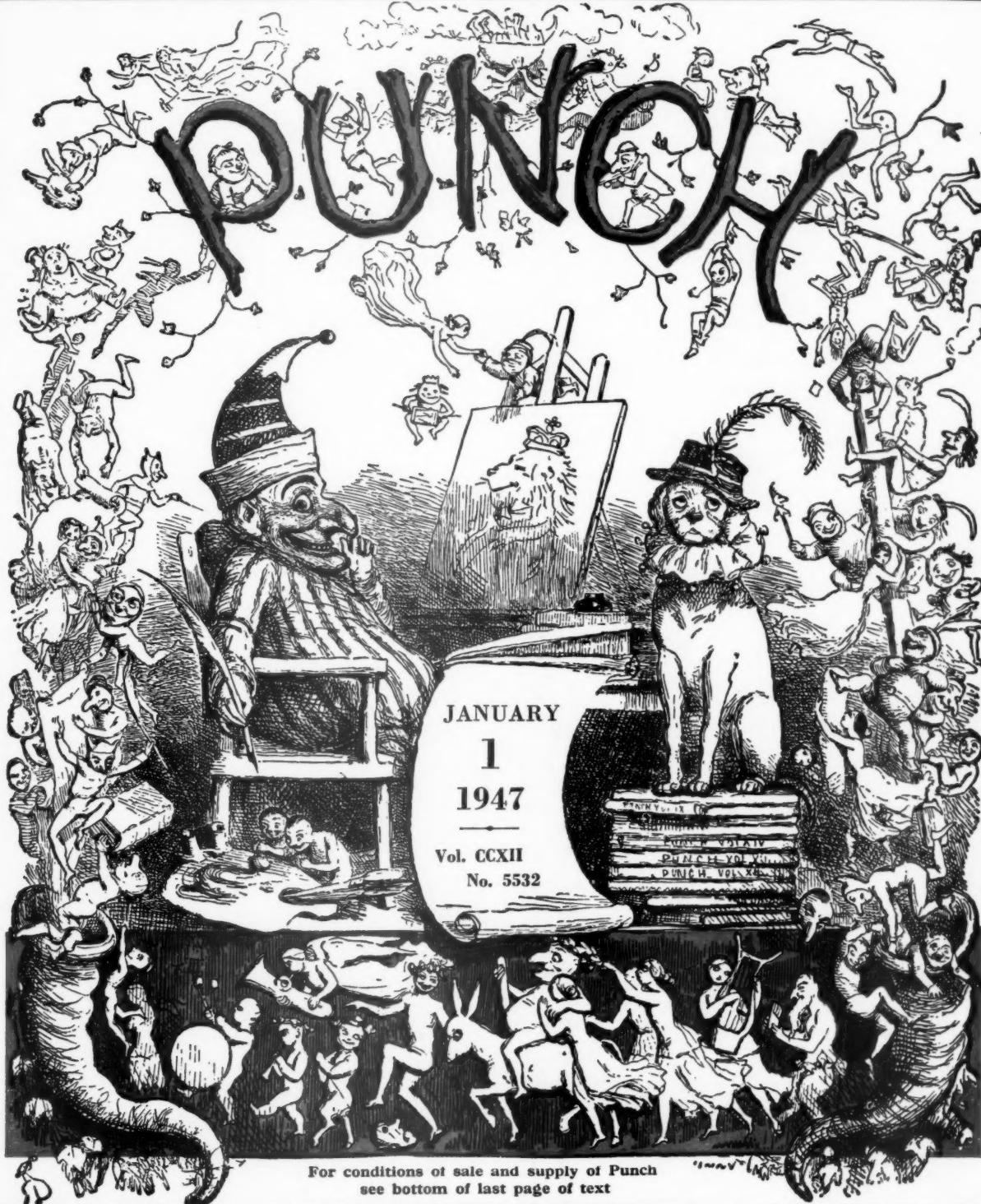


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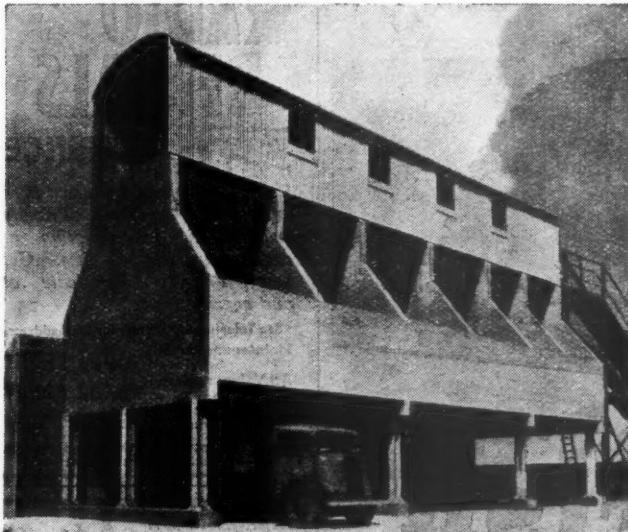
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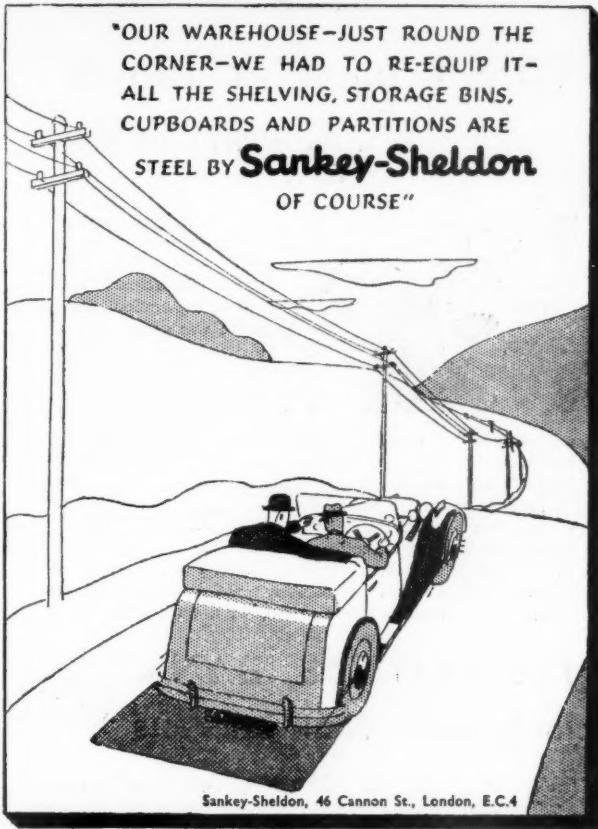
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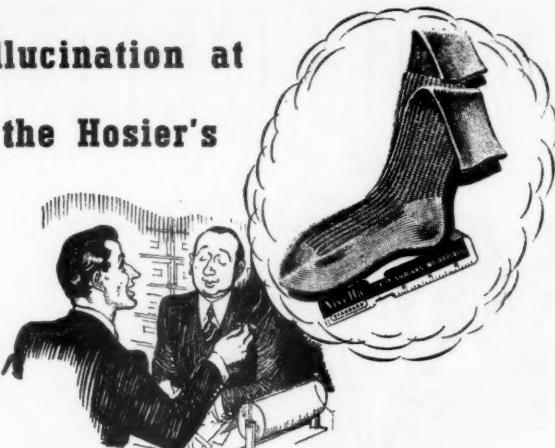
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HIS
E
NGLAND...**

THE LOCAL in all its forms is very significant of our English life. We ourselves prefer the ingle nook to chromium plate, the genuine Victorian to sham Elizabethan, and we make refreshment complete with a long pull at a favourite briar filled with Balkan Sobranie or a cigarette of the same name and equally old and mild.

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"It is a mirage, Sir," said Mr. Hock the hosier, "Or, to be absolutely accurate, two mirages."

"I concede the point as regards plurality; there are two socks, alike in their splendid symmetry. 'Viyella' socks, Mr. Hock! I have pined for their return — and here they are!"

"Merely in mirage form, Sir."

"But, Mr. Hock!" cried the customer, "Mirage form my foot! Their superb texture is almost tangible — it says 'Viyella', 'Viyella', and nothing but 'Viyella'!"

"Alas, Sir, you are but another victim of the universal wish for 'Viyella': these spectral phenomena are a common symptom."

"And when will wishes be translated into 'Viyella'?"

"Soon, I hope with all my heart," said Mr. Hock the hosier, fervently.

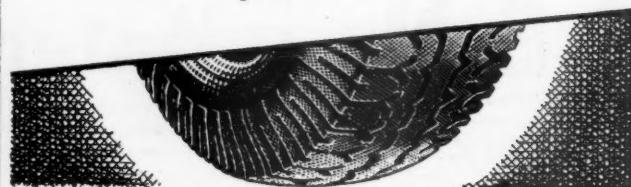
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"Pretty important job on today;
mustn't be heavy with catarrh. . . .



Don't know where I'd be
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Only the best is
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C'EST LA PAIX

"Ah, m'sieur le capitaine, it is so good to see you back. England, she has been kind to her soldiers?"

"I have a hearth and home, Pierre — and next year we get coal for the hearth."

"We hear many rumours, m'sieur. The food, it is . . . ?"

"Utilitarian but adequate. You forget the Anglo-Saxon powers

ROSE'S—There is no substitute

of digestion, mon ami."

"And in the cellar, you have . . . ?"

"One bottle of Algerian wine, one empty Rose's, and dry rot."

"Ah, m'sieur, England she has no Rose's now?"

"This winter of our discontent is purely temporary, Pierre — soon it will be spring again."

'Make the
most of
each loaf.'

HÖVIS

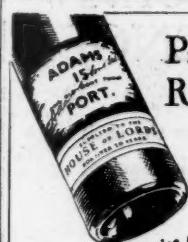
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Still
better—
GREYS

Just honest to goodness tobacco



ISSUED BY GODFREY PHILLIPS LIMITED



Witch-Wicken¹

(Circa 1800)

THEÄR's heder² wicken an' sheder wicken—
one's got berries, an' one's got none—
an' if yer doän't wear one on 'em
yer'll knoä as the spell is on.
A she, she weär's the heder wicken,
an' a he, the sheder stick:
an' put one in yer coät or wig—
if it's dark, an' the fog is thick.

Theär's Heäth from Lincoln to the Fens,
an' the Fens is raw and dank;
theär's goss an' warren on the Woälds
from Sotby to the sand-ill bank:
an' that's wheär the warlocks gets at night
when the moon comes ower the 'ill,
wi' a leering faäce, an' a twizzened faäce,
as gold as a blackbird's bill.

But that theär's only when nights is fine . . .
When it's ricking the snoä, or wet,
or a fog comes up, or a drizzle down,
it's in the village they get:

*it's back-doorsteäds, and causies dark
an' yew-trees by the church,
an' then it's noä good using oäk,
or esh, or thorn, or birch.*

In 'owry storms the owd folks put
witch-wicken on the doörs,
an' knoä as nowt 'll up-on-end
itsen from under floörs.
They knoä that nowt'll shuffle in
when moggies³ are shuvved out—
theär's nowt like maäkin' sartin-sewer
when witches creëps about.

When me and Kate went walkin' out,
she got a wicken an' a sheder
an' cut it to a T⁴ to rights,
while I cut 'er a däintý heder.
She gemme mine, as greän as gress;
on 'ers the berries lit up red—
soä then no witches upped an' caäme
an' stopped us bein' wed!

¹ Old Lincolnshire name for the mountain ash, or rowan. As in Scotland, it was once used as a sure spell against witchcraft. ² Heder and sheder = male and female. ³ Moggies = cats. ⁴ The wicken had to be cut to a T to be effective.

Charivaria

THE ending of the U.S. coal strike just prevented a cut in Britain's bread ration. We can now turn with relief to the contemplation of more urgent shortages.

A medical writer mentions that the type of flu now prevailing lasts for six days. If you haven't got the better of it by that time, play for a draw.

A pamphlet warning householders not to throw water outdoors during frosty weather was distributed in one London suburb just before Christmas. A syndicate of carol-singers is thought to have been behind this.



A London policeman found a chimney-sweep fast asleep in a shop doorway, with his head resting on a bag of soot, in the early hours of the morning one day last week. He was probably dreaming of a black Christmas.

Instantaneous Tax Relief

"Brand Stomach Powders—effective for all disorders, including Purchase Tax. 1s."—Advt.

In the course of a recent after-dinner speech a celebrity declared that he owed his success to the mastering of an unbridled temper. Since when he has never looked black.

For a minor offence a magistrate recently sentenced a man to twenty-four hours' imprisonment. For such a short stay it is not necessary to give up your ration book.

A coalman complains that because he told a woman that he had no coal for her she took him by the throat and shook him. Well, that was one way of getting some coal-dust.

"Frost Stops Hunting," announces a headline in a daily paper. Yes, but not until it had found our pipes.

"When guests arrive at an English home there is an immediate discussion on the weather," says a writer. Under new housing schemes no hall will be complete without a built-in barometer.

A correspondent in a weekly paper says he can stand happily for hours just listening to running water. He is believed to be a plumber on holiday.

"UNESCO
TO CLEAR AWAY FOG"
"Daily Herald."
Down, Fido!

A London tobacconist declares that he just ignores people who are offensive to him when he says "Sorry, no cigarettes." Including the customer who said "That's a recording of course"?



The recent snowfall reached a depth of two or three inches in some parts of Outer London. Many housewives had to wait for the thaw before they could locate their coal-heaps.

Crowds in a Midland town recently scrambled to pick up £1 notes which were blowing about the street. Someone had spread a rumour that they were coupons.

Some monthly periodicals have become so small that it is difficult to prevent their theft from public libraries. The release of additional newsprint may mark the end of pocketed editions.



A man who has just completed his first novel says that his wife is his severest critic. He hopes.

"CHIANG'S GENERALS REPORTED TO BE FLYING BACK TO FRONT."
Headline in Calcutta paper.
Subterfuge?

"All my life," writes a clergyman, "I have been a teetotaller." But at many a wedding he must have spliced the main brace.



A STICKY WICKET

"Good luck, my boy!"



"... And then we all sang 'For all the Saints who from their neighbours rest.'"

Mutiny in the Mediterranean

(A tale of little meaning though the words are strong.)

THE little group of soldiers sprawled on the thick moss. Before them lay the still waters of the lake stretching between walls of granite the summits of which were caught in the evening light. But the peacefulness of the scene with the long leaves weeping in the little stream and the poppy hanging down from the craggy ledge, all this was not reflected in their mood. They were browned off.

"We're due back in that blasted boat in an hour," said Mikros sourly.

"All very well for you to talk!" replied Megalos. "You're small and can curl up in the prow. I'm always bumping my head against the spars and cross-pieces or getting thwarts stuck into my ribs."

"If you ask me," said Mikros bitterly, "our quarters aren't fit for a slave. Let's refuse to go back!"

"That would be mutiny," answered Megalos.

"If we called it a strike we might get

away with it. How about it, Alphie?" Mikros turned to a lance-corporal who had the arm-of-the-service strip of a herald on his tunie. But L/Corporal Alphredos paid no attention. He had been sitting in silence for some time quietly nibbling at the fruit which they had bought from a mild little man in exchange for some trophies from the battle-field. Now he was staring in front of him in a dreamy way and murmuring gently to himself, "There is sweet music here that softer falls than petals of blown roses on the grass."

"Oh, stow it, Alphie!" said Pte. Mikros roughly. "This is serious. Why should we put up with it all? We won the war, didn't we?"

"The ten years' war in Troy!" muttered Alphredos. "And our great deeds—half-forgotten things!"

"Have you gone mad?" asked Pte. Megalos unkindly. "Give us a piece of that fruit."

"We were heroes once," persisted

Mikros. "Remember what they said on VT Day."

"VT Day was a farce!" said Megalos savagely. "The officers got all the spoils. And the frat. Old Oddie got a strange bit."

"Captain Odysseus is all right," replied Mikros, munching at a piece of the fruit. "Useful man to have in a scrap."

"The trouble about him," countered Megalos, "is that he's always getting us into scraps. The way we're going, Paris's war-crimes trial will be over before we get home."

"Home!" sighed Pte. Mikros. "I wish I was home now."

"Dear is the memory of our wedded lives," agreed L/Corporal Alphredos, "and dear the last embraces of our wives. But all hath suffered change."

"You're talking daft," said Mikros. "But I sort of see what you mean."

"Our looks are strange," went on Alphie, "and we should come like—er—"

"Ghosts to trouble joy?" suggested Pte. Megalos suddenly.

"Exactly." L/Corporal Alphredos nodded sleepily. "Ghosts to trouble joy."

"What on earth are you two talking about?" exclaimed the puzzled Mikros.

"Those old faces of our infancy!" continued Alphie, unabashed.

"Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!" said Pte. Megalos scornfully.

"Look!" shouted Mikros angrily, "the question is, are we going back to that boat or not?"

"We have had enough of action and of motion we!" answered Megalos decidedly.

"Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard when the surge was seething free!" chimed in L/Corporal Alphredos. He stood up with difficulty, and waved his arm in a gesture of mild-minded melancholy. "Let us swear an oath," he said with drowsy solemnity, "and keep it with an equal mind, in the hollow lotos-land to live and lie reclined on the hills like gods together, careless of mankind."

"Surely, surely," murmured Mikros, who had suddenly acquired a dreamy look, "slumber is more sweet than toil!"

And whispering in chorus "O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more!" the three soldiers fell asleep.

The sergeant of the military police found them some hours later propped on beds of amaranth and moly. He tried to rouse them.

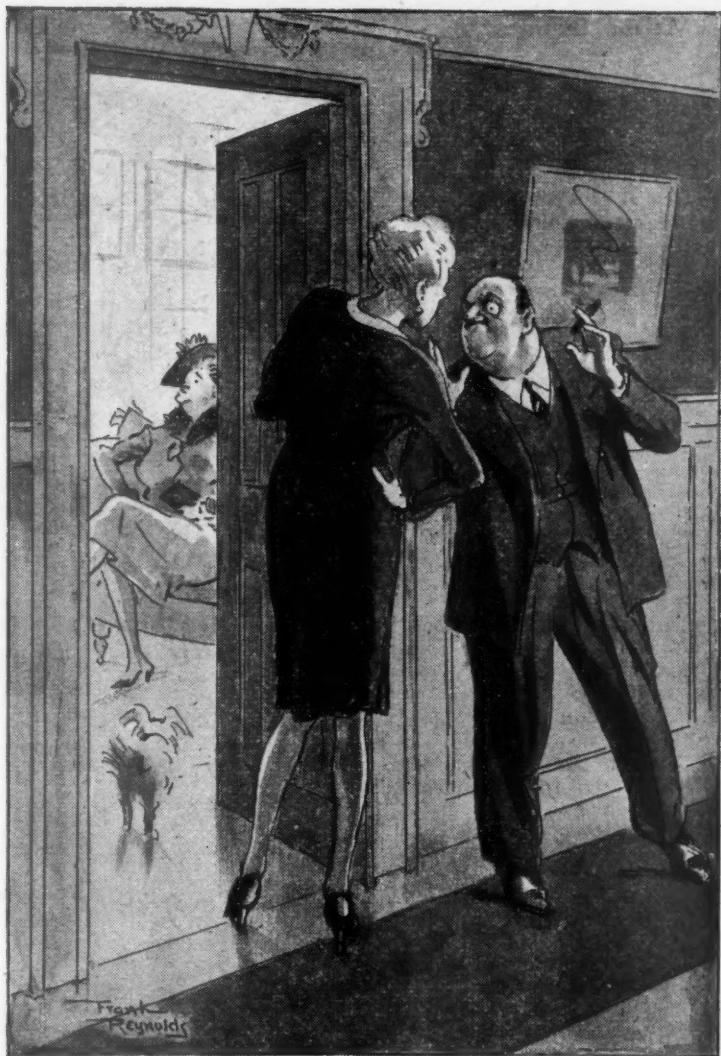
"Let us alone!" said L/Corporal Alphredos. "Time driveth onward fast and in a little while our lips are dumb."

"Let us alone!" echoed Pte. Megalos. "What is it that will last? All things are taken from us and become portions and parcels of the dreadful past."

"Let us alone!" repeated Pte. Mikros. "What pleasure can we have to war with evil?"

L/Corporal Alphredos gazed at the sergeant with half-dropped eyelid still. "Is there any peace," he asked petulantly, "in ever climbing up the climbing wave? All things have rest and ripen towards the grave in silence; ripen, fall and cease: give us long rest or death, dark death or dreamful ease." He fell asleep in a half-dream.

The sergeant could make little of their explanations. He took the men into custody and sat down to make out his report. "I proceeded ashore and found the accused in an intoxicated condition. They were in possession of foodstuffs believed to have been acquired on the black market and



"Offer her five pounds a week and all found, a room to herself with radio and private bath, and as many evenings off as she wants—but for heaven's sake don't give her the impression that we want her."

consisting of . . ." He scratched his head. Difficult to say what it was. He took a bite thoughtfully. Half an hour later he was still struggling with his report. "I cautioned them and they elected to make a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong like a tale of little meaning though the words are strong."

He sat back wearily with a feeling of confusion worse than death. At last he rose.

"All things have rest: why should we toil alone?" he sighed, and proceeded unsteadily ashore.

Another Nice Derangement

"When seen by the police, it was alleged, [he] said — insulted him and his father with foul epitaphs."—*Hans paper*.

○ ○

Words Fall

"Euston station is to be made so beautiful that the passenger he will forget to catch his train will wander around so entranced that there is danger who sees it for the first train," said Sir Charles Newton, "Egyptian paper."

At the Pictures

DICKENS TRANSFERRED

WHAT is most pleasing about *Great Expectations* (Director: DAVID LEAN) is that throughout it manages to avoid that effect, characteristic of so many British costume pieces for so many years, of an amateur pageant in the open air, on a dull day, photographed as if for a newsreel. Here we have a British costume piece, full enough of improbabilities and richly fantastic characters; and yet it gives an impression of—no, not reality, for no faithful version of Dickens could be that—but of (shall we say?) reasonableness, suitability, sense. And, particularly in the first self-contained episode of *Mugwitch* on the marshes, it is full of most attractively composed and designed scenes, brilliant in their black and white and often a great pleasure to the eye.

Not only does it tell the story with remarkable accuracy, apart from the omissions necessary to squeeze it into two hours, but it contrives to do so in what could be called the film equivalent of the Dickensian way. As a Dickens ignoramus who has read the novel only once, many years ago, I was interested to find myself again and again knowing almost exactly how Dickens would have narrated the scene at that moment unfolding, without being aware whether in the book he did give it more than passing mention. That means style, or (at the lowest valuation) manner, which in this kind of picture is certainly a good thing.

Other writers have observed a falling-off of vividness when *Pip* and *Estella*, the children, grow up into JOHN MILLS and VALERIE HOBSON. It is perhaps the more noticeable because in most such films the trouble is the other way round, and it is the childish episodes that seem artificial; but I don't think that here it adds up to a serious defect. This is a good film, well worth everybody's while.

As for the new Disney . . . it seems absurd to call it a Disney. The "live action" part of *Song of the South* was the responsibility of another director, and "live action"



(Great Expectations)

IN TOWN
Joe Gargery BERNARD MILES



(Song of the South)

Brer Rabbit (to Uncle Remus—JAMES BASKETT). "So—in the programme you're one of the 'live action' guys!"

accounts for much the greater proportion of it. Cartoon episodes with *Brer Rabbit* and *Brer Fox* appear from time to time, but obviously the chief aim of the producers of this film has been to turn out a warm, magnolia-scented bath of emotional nostalgia for the envious, sentimental, worried, neurotic, hag-ridden audience of to-day to luxuriate in. Ah, if we were only back on the old plantation in the eighties, with no responsibilities, no fears about the future of the world, and fatherly old *Uncle Remus* to tell us stories and solve our little family problems! It seems to me almost certain that *Song of the South* was made partly to cash in on this craving, and partly as a framework for the usual bunch of cheerful, obvious, tinkling tunes, every one simple enough to stay in anybody's head after one hearing. Into this commercially important structure the cartoon episodes have to edge their way as best they can . . . and none of them seemed to me as good as the 1942 *Mickey* ("Pluto and the Armadillo") revived in the same programme.

I can't value *The Razor's Edge* (Director: EDMUND GOULDING) as a version of the Somerset Maugham novel, but I rather doubt whether Mr. MAUGHAM would have chosen TYRONE POWER as the best actor to portray his representative of Goodness (capital G) in the modern world—or, indeed, whether he approves of the film's introduction of himself, *Somerset Maugham*, as a character. The big scene, which is recognizable as a typical Maugham situation, comes over well . . .

Lady in the Lake (Director: ROBERT MONTGOMERY) is from a book by RAYMOND CHANDLER who wrote *Farewell My Lovely*; in noticing which film I observed that an attempt had been made to reach a film-narrative equivalent of the first person in which so many of these murder thrillers are written. *Lady in the Lake* tries even harder: you get the whole story as if you were the hero, seeing with his eyes and even, at one point, kissing AUDREY TOTTER. The advantage seems to be a gain in suspense; the disadvantage, a slowing of pace in connecting-shots. For the rest the film runs true to type, and very entertaining it is. R. M.

Sand-bagged

I WAS held up by the swing-bridge, so I moved to a grille in the wall to see what type of vessel was approaching. It was a small shallow-bottomed steamer, still some way off. It sorely needed paint and its thin drab funnel was blotched, presumably by fungi.

"Not a very important boat," I observed to the man already at the grille.

He turned a watery and disapproving eye upon me.

"For Gawd's sake doan say that, mister," he beseeched. "Yer doan know what yer a-talking about. It's one o' the most important boats wot comes up."

"Oh!" I murmured.

I adjusted my spectacles and looked at the vessel again. Owing to the narrowness of the banks it was advancing very slowly. It was shabby and dilapidated, as though it had lain in the lost property office a long time and then been sold owing to the legal period having elapsed.

"It's a stout boat, mister."

I stared at him and then at the boat.

"It doesn't look very stout," I hazarded.

"A stout boat, not a stout boat."

"I—er—"

"Yer see them yeller tarp'lin's? Well, they're covering barrels o' stout. That black stuff wiv froff on."

"I see."

"Are yer aware o' the position round 'ere, mister? It's famine. There ain't been no stout round 'ere for the bess part of a fortnit."

I commiserated.

"It 'ouldn't be so bad if the beer was aw right. But it ain't. Afore the war I've used better stuff for washin' the dog."

"H'm."

"Yes, mister. I've frown better stuff over the waits."

I began a slight attempt to justify the Government, but was interrupted.

"And it 'its the wimmin more'n the men."

"The beer shortage?"

"No. The stout. My ole woman's 'ad a bottle every night sin' we was 'itched. After we got back from church 'er farver took me on one side an' whispered in my ear'ole. He was on my side."

"She likes stout then?"

"Like it! It's 'er 'obby, mister. If she misses a day or two she seems to shrink and 'er cloas get too big for 'er. And that's the trouble."



NORMAN MAN慈E

"The Captain says 'Happy New Year,' Doc, and would you care to take something with him?"

"No doubt at some time the doctor ordered it—"

"No. I flippin' well ordered it. Self-preservation, that's what it's called, mister. Separated from 'er sweetening it's like livin' in a wop's nest. The cat's more sense than me—it does clear out."

"She seems to be highly-strung."

"Ighly-strong's a better word, mister. Jewring the war she worked on the railway in the goods yard, liftin' cannons and things. And don't I know it. She rang me wiv the fryin'-pan the uvver night. The bump's on my 'ead yet. If the Germans 'ad won we'd 'ave been shot for imitatatin' the curfew. Simply becos

there was beer all night at The Fox, and no stout."

"Was she in The Fox or—"

"No, but I was. And I 'appened to let it slip when I got 'ome."

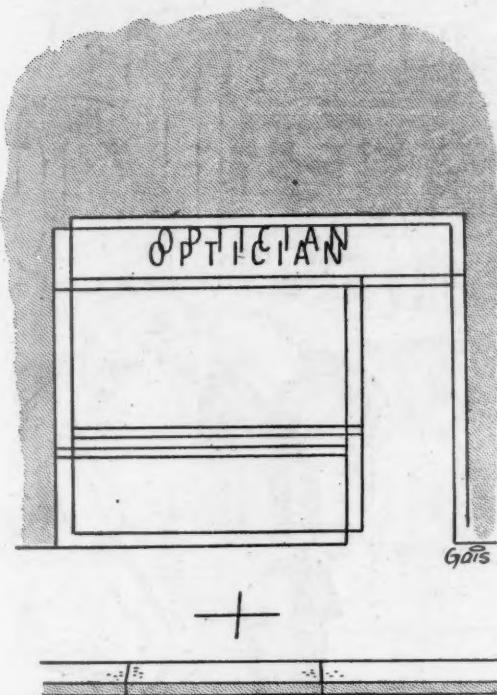
"Wait a minute," I said. I was looking at the oncoming boat. "I don't think those are tarpaulins." The boat drew nearer. "Why, it's sand!"

"Sand!" he uttered.

"Sand," I confirmed.

It was, and the sight caused him to shrink so that his clothes appeared too big for him.

"Sand," he hissed—"a cargo o' sand! It ain't wurf swingin' the ruddy bridge for!"



H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

THIS Fragment was composed when a travelling salesman called to sell me a pocket dictaphone and invited me to try it out free. I did not buy it as the purchase price included servicing by lady mechanics, and such seemed to my wife contrary to nature.

TWELVE GOOD MEN AND TRUDY (The scene is an ante-room.)

DOWAGER JUKES. I do love a good rout. As soon as I see the water-ices and hear the violins, something goes tumpty-umpty beneath my corsage.

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. Personally I much prefer a round game such as Loo or Clumps.

DOWAGER JUKES. One can play round games at home. We often do, up and down the long gallery; and it's surprising how often a newel staircase comes in useful. As many as five times in one evening we have been so exhausted with laughing that we have had to have the hunters up from the stables and gallop bare-back across field and hedgerow in the cool night air.

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. I am not a spirited man, and the gay throng beyond the portière here makes me shrink into my shell, like a tortoise forced into the company of birds of paradise.

DOWAGER JUKES. Is this merely a simile, or does it embody some personal observation?

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. Enough of that. Do you see what I see—the Ambassador waiting in an alcove

for a tête-à-tête? But with whom? My guess is the Foreign Secretary. Alternatively, one of the dancers from the Opera.

DOWAGER JUKES. You are quite wrong. He is merely indulging in his favourite vice of semi-secret drinking. See him produce from his capacious robes the wines of the Gironde, the Midi and the Veldt. But why do we stay here? The violins are playing wildly, as if tossing roses to us. Let us pick them up. The night, velvet without, is gold brocade within. Do you polka?

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. Pardon me, no. A vow . . .

DOWAGER JUKES. Very hampering. How, then, do you occupy yourself on evenings like this? Do you just ogle, or wait for somebody to show you card-tricks?

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. The pleasures of melancholy are no less tasty than those of libertinage.

Enter a FOOTMAN

FOOTMAN. Take your seats for the First Supper. The toast list is as follows: The Belle of the Ball—Representative Government—The Hereafter.

DOWAGER JUKES. Is it a good sit-down supper, or do our squires have to make a bull-rush at the buffet?

FOOTMAN. I said quite clearly, "Take your seats for the First Supper." You will be waited on by orphans.

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. I feel we need a great deal more information. For example, how does it compare with the Second Supper?

FOOTMAN. The Second Supper comes pretty late in the festivities. Dawn, by then, will be well broken, and it will be a matter of porridge and kedgeree.

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. In that case perhaps we had better go down at once, though blind to what awaits us. Let us hope the violins will be inaudible.

FOOTMAN. They will be drowned by the band of the Merionethshire Volunteers.

(A jewel robbery takes place.)

ONLOOKERS. What a to-do . . . Dowse the lights . . . He went through there . . . He took a Rembrandt on the way out.

DOWAGER JUKES. Surely you are enjoying this?

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. Well, I will certainly go so far as to say that this is slightly more entertaining than what has happened heretofore, but not very much. I find a certain personal interest in the scene because I recognized the miscreant as he passed, but not being a man of much human sympathy I really do not care whether he is caught or not.

DOWAGER JUKES. I hope you cut him.

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. I never acknowledge anybody.
Enter the DAUGHTER of the house

DAUGHTER. Well, I have come out good and proper, that I will say. The Deb with the Dibs, they call me now. Angela and I tossed up and I am to be a tom-boy, while she is a clinging vine. Yoicks!

FOOTMAN. Your Pa and Ma should be real proud of you. She has passed Matric, you know. I always said she would, but the betting was against her. Twelve o'clock! That means everybody's got to get masked.

(They mask.)

DOWAGER JUKES. My dear Judge, I think they expect dominoes. That is obviously designed for a Guy Fawkes.

JUDGE JONES-EVANS. Oh, tut. Have I committed a sartorial faux-pas? The Citizens' Advice Bureau has never let me down before.

THE AMBASSADOR. I-sh bin fai'fu' to you, Shynara, in my fash-fash-fashination.

FINIS

My Gadget

ONE morning, in a sanguine mood,
When doubts seemed dupes and venture
good,
I saw a gadget which I deemed
Might really prove the thing it seemed.
Assisted by a friendly hand
You popped it in your boiler, and
After connecting A with B,
And something else with C or D,
You put a something in a slot
And your cold water became hot.
"Fool-proof and simple in design."
I wrote a cheque, and it was mine.

Assisted by a friendly hand,
More prompt than mine to understand
The purport of those simple rules,
Which claimed to triumph over fools,
I gave my gadget of our best,
Then put our labours to the test.
We watched, we waited, and behold!
Our tepid water became cold.

Rebuffed, perplexed, yet undismayed
I called an expert to our aid.
The expert shook his sapient head,
Then smiled a dubious smile, and said,
"Before results can be forthcoming,
There must be some extensive plumbing."

Now, as I cannot get a plumber
Before the middle of next summer,
And, even then, without a permit
My gadget would remain a hermit,
Tearless, but with a certain gloom,
I have consigned it to the tomb,
And marked the place in which I laid it
With this inscription, "Britain Made It."
Perhaps (who knows?) the grateful soil
Will some day bubble up and boil. G. F. B.

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Centenary History of Punch

THE centenary of *Punch* fell in 1941, and work on the production of a new history of the paper has now been restarted, after an interval during the war years. It is felt that a great deal of valuable material bearing on the subject must be held in private collections, and we should be most grateful for any assistance our readers can give us. What we want is *not* drawings or rough sketches (of which we already possess an ample supply), but letters, documents or authoritative stories relating to *Punch* and its contributors. Any material that readers may be good enough to lend will be copied and quickly returned. Communications should be addressed to: THE SECRETARY, PUNCH OFFICE, 10 BOUVERIE ST., E.C.4.



The Circus—Welcome Back!

IT is pleasant to consider that so long as there are elephants in circuses—and circuses without elephants would be unthinkable—the accumulated traditions of the big top will not be lost, however interminably wars drag on. For we know that, even after many years of rustication on half pay in some non-ruminant guest-house far from the sawdust and the floodlights, and years made no doubt more anxious by a nagging fear that Hannibal's successful experiments might once again appeal to hard-pressed chiefs of staff, the elephant never forgets. His stubborn memory provides a stout and I should say practically fireproof repository for all the complicated business of the circus. He is a durable information bureau on which its masters can draw as they will and, though it is scarcely a question one cares to ask, it would be no surprise to learn that in bridging the gap of eight years even Mr. CYRIL and Mr. BERNARD MILLS may have had to fall back on the unfailing wisdom of their Committee of Six—ladies the lot of them, and no less wise for that. Certainly nothing has been forgotten to bring their first post-war circus up to the levels of the past, and the mind reels at the mountains of paper, leagues of red tape and dusty deserts of officialdom through which they must have battled to collect so many good turns so quickly. What sort of a war, I wonder, have all these brave people of the circus had, trapped unsuspectingly in odd corners of uncomfortable countries suddenly gone mad? A rare bunch of short stories is waiting here for somebody.

HORSES? Have no fear. Fat horses, fat, well-corned, cynically superior horses that eye the serried ranks of goggling humanity with a bean-fed insolence for which who shall blame them? I know nothing about horses except that long ago they put me on their black list and circulated my name so widely that there is not a field in the world into which I can stray to pick a dandelion without being a target instantly for murderous hoofs and gnashing gamboge fangs. This is, however, a purely personal matter between me and the horse, and in no way blinds me to the beauties of polished necks and the proud magnificence of curving rumps, or robs me of admiration for the many clever things horses can do and we can't. There are some very knowledgeable horses gathered at Olympia. I think the ones I like best

are Miss PEGGY HOLT's six lovely greys. She has only to flick her whip and they waltz, and waltz with a certain passion, to flick it again and they break into a kind of Clydesdale Fling. Even in such company No. 4 is a creature of outstanding intelligence, and I dare say he is one of our most constant readers. Then there is YOUNG ROY, who at seventeen contrives not only not to be mangled and trampled on by his two large cream horses and his six very small black ponies, which to me is very wonderful, but to have peculiar dominion over them. At his bidding the horses go through a lot of advanced yoga movements, and the ponies, looking rather like a prep school out for a Sunday walk, so neat and well-behaved, obey a set of traffic-lights far more accurately than the average motorist of to-day.

The CUMBERLANDS, seven of them, use two vast white quadrupeds as a perambulating gymnasium. At times they are all housed comfortably on the two great backs, at others the air is full of flying CUMBERLANDS either landing or taking off. Built to withstand the impact of at least a hundred CUMBERLANDS, the horses take no notice of their antics whatever, but continue to belt philosophically around the arena. They would look well in the shafts of an Emperor's bath-chair. Acrobats are the SYLVANS, a girl, two men, and three fine black chargers. While the last-named live up to this description the girl gyrates on a bar held by her comrades; and, as for us, we hold our breath. I must say that our pleasure at this turn was dimmed a little by an S.O.S. through the loud-speakers urging a Member of Parliament who was present to forgo serious matters and return at once to the House. It is always bitter at a moment of illusion and escape to be reminded of man's grosser nature.

I don't know whether you feel humbled, as I do, in the presence of an elephant. In the presence of six I am overcome by a sense of total deficiency. BERTRAM MILLS's, already mentioned, look as if they carry all the secrets of the universe behind their piggy little eyes. When they dance on two legs I could cry at all the unnameable sadnesses that have ever been, when they trundle round holding each other's tails I wish their procession could go on to the end of time, and when at last they lie down in slow motion it seems to me the peak of all drama. There is

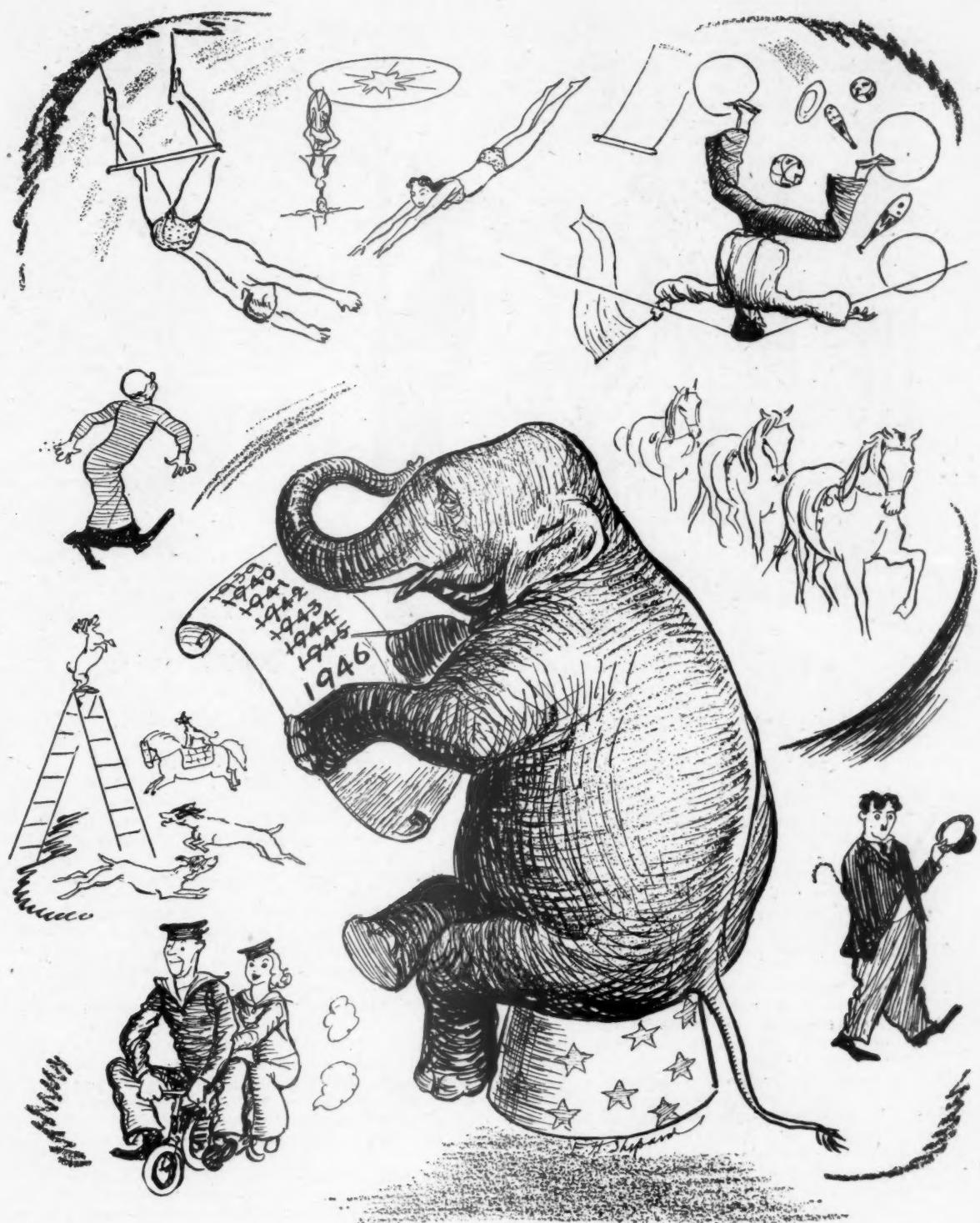
something special, I hope you will agree, about elephants.

So many first-rate turns make up this programme that I cannot describe them all, but the ALIZES (on their flying trapezes) compel mention. A girl and two men, performing near the roof with, thank heavens, a net below, they take aerial acrobatics right into the field of ballet. I have seldom seen anything so graceful. One of them, a magnificent fellow, performs two and a half somersaults before being caught by his suspended mate, *by the knee!* Also the REVERHOS, tight-wire merchants, one of whom balances on the wire with one hand while he revolves three wheels on his feet and his other hand; the TOVARICH TROUPE, very non-utility tumblers; LOUISE AND HER DOGS, the latter delightful ruffians playing all manner of tricks with a pony and racing round the top of the ring in opposite directions, jumping each other when a head-on crash seems unavoidable; LES IDALYS, one of whom cycles upside down round a circle in the roof while the other hangs, also inverted, by her feet from a trapeze he holds in his mouth, a curious way, to be sure, of earning a living; and the BROCKWAYS, trick cyclists whom I like especially and whose transport pool ranges from a bike the size of a roller-skate to one, a pattern I can never find in a shop, with square wheels.

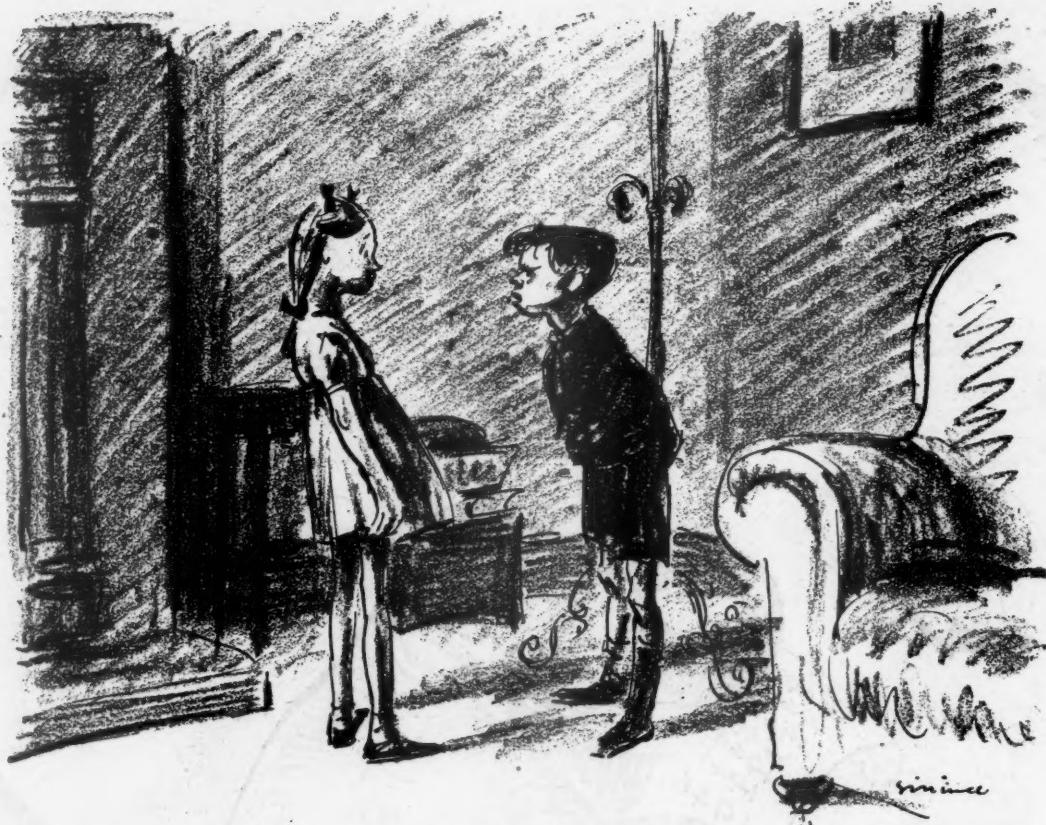
In the matter of laughter the MILLS BROTHERS always do us proud. CHARLIE RIVELS, who I am told was obliged when he visited the Third Reich to remove his Chaplin moustache in deference to a native comedian now out of business, is as funny as ever in applying the Charlie technique to the trapeze. The ANDREUS treat us to a memorable ballet and boast a thirty-foot shirt for which they must have compounded their coupons for life; and the proceedings are immeasurably enriched by the presence of my favourite clown, EMMETT KELLY, from America, who just dodders about knocking nails into the audience. It is splendid to see him again.

No notice of this circus could be complete without a word of praise for the removing men who clear the arena of apparatus much faster than you or I can clear the breakfast, or without a warning to middle-aged parents that the Fun Fair outside is better stocked than ever with devilish engines nicely calculated to derange their digestions for life.

ERIC.



AT THE CIRCUS AGAIN



"We can't go flying the kite with Dad this afternoon after all—Mum's just exercised the veto."

Milk-O

NOT the high-mettled steed that champs the
bit,
That cries Aha and proudly snuffs the
breeze

Concerns me now; as doubtless you'll admit
Petrol has done the trick for such as these.
To-day I sing
The mild milk-pony, quite another thing.

The lordlier survivors of his race
Are there for sport, not for the general use,
Take jumps at Aintree at a breakneck pace,
Devour the flat, or gallop like the deuce
With pink astride
After the villain fox, whom woe betide.

And these would scorn him with his puny load.
Still you may see at Ascot on its Day
Down that long flat undeviating road
The small milk-pony plod his weary way,
Pricking his ears
To mark, though not for him, the echoing cheers.

Yet ever warm the welcome on his beat.
No child but profits from his daily call,

No housewife desperate for some homely sweet
But takes her dollop gladly, e'en though small,
Swopping her few
Poor empty bottles to be filled anew.

And he is all men's friend. His placid eye
Declares it, and his confidential stand
Across the pavement lest the passer-by
Omit to pat him with a casual hand,
While here is one,
Haply, with sugar, or a bit of bun.

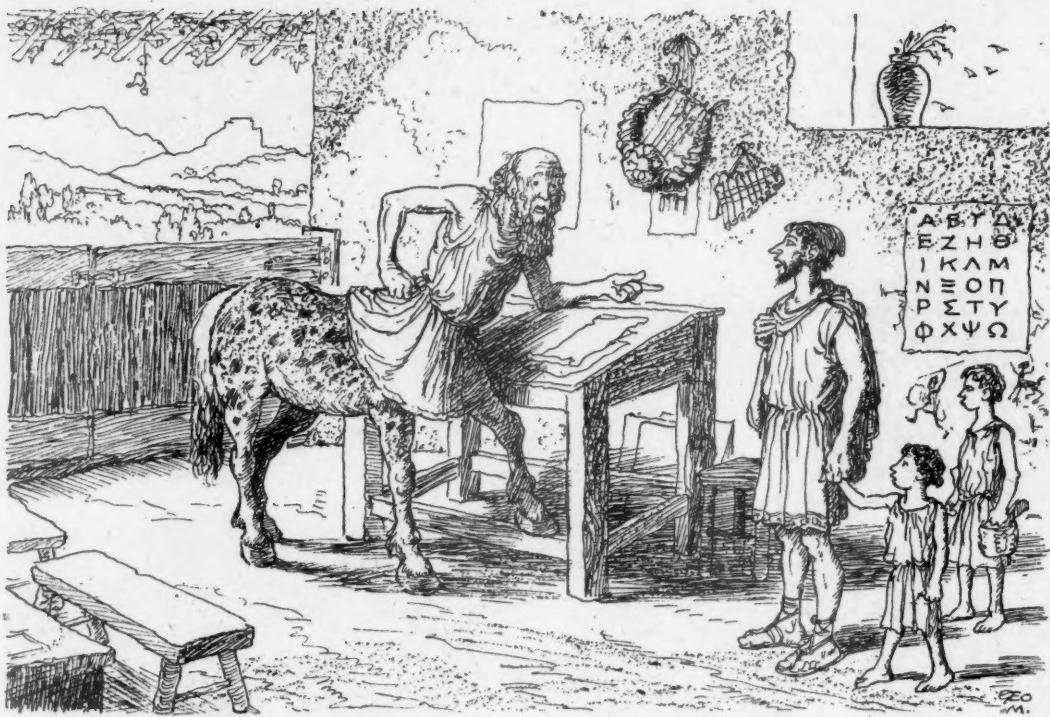
And his I hold the enviable lot
Who takes from door to door his easy stroll
(Though 'twas but yesterday I saw one trot
And very well he did it on the whole)
Unwhipped, unspurred,
He needs no driving but the milkman's word.

So, pony, though the modern rush for speed
Tends to wipe out the loftier of your ilk,
Still will that quiet walk subserve a need
As just the thing for carting round the milk.
Then cheerly, friend.
You'll score off all the others in the end. DUM-DUM.



KING COAL AND THE MAGIC WAND

“Back, Demon Frost. Though you may do your worst,
I am his fairy guardian from Jan. First.”



"The Ministry of Education say I'm a teacher and the Ministry of Transport insist that I'm a horse—and now I'm getting forms from both."

One Alone

IN the summer I was prompted by a master-stroke of advertising to write off for a pair of grey trousers "of exquisite quality rayon with the appearance of fine linen." They arrived last Monday, and because I like to wear new clothes as soon as I get them, I wore them.

There had not been complete estrangement between myself and the department store all this time. Less than a month after sending my cheque and coupons I had received a pair of tomato-coloured trousers suitable for an eight-foot man who didn't mind sewn-up buttonholes, and some weeks later I got a pair of sea-green ones designed to fit a short-legged water-butt. I also received, in all, five cyclostyled postcards trusting that I was not being inconvenienced.

So when the plum-coloured trousers proved a passable fit I decided to make do with them and try to forget about the whole affair. They were costing me nothing under my current budget,

as the cheque and coupons had been cleared in July.

But exquisite quality rayon, whether having the appearance of fine linen or not, lacks the snug, wind-proof character so desirable in winter trouser-material. After a short nap during which my train stood in an exposed station with all its doors open I awoke from dreams of Arctic exploration and had to pinch myself to make sure that I was wearing any trousers at all. Before long I had to pinch myself to make sure that I was wearing any legs. Leaving the station at the other end I was astonishingly forbearing towards a man who claimed to have kicked me on the shin. "I didn't feel a thing," I assured him as he apologized in an anguish of remorse.

At the first man's shop I came to I hurled myself through the door and strode urgently to the counter.

"Trousers," I said, simply.

At first I thought that my request had been drowned by the chattering

of my suspender-buckles. Then I saw that the man was busy. Not only was he supporting a bale of cloth on one upraised knee, but held a glass-topped show-case of silk squares in his hands and was performing a little one-legged dance, trying to shut a drawer with his free foot. The lid of a white cardboard box was clamped under his chin, and his spectacles, narrowly surviving some recent misadventure, dangled from one ear.

He gave me a wry-necked nod of greeting. Then he wrenches the bale into place with an effort which should have torn his every ligament to ribbons and said "Called up the boy."

"I see," I said. "I want some warm trousers, preferably—"

"Preferably?" he echoed on a note of mild rebuke. He blew out his cheeks, refixed his spectacles and wiped his forehead hastily on a handy pullover.

"Well," I said, stepping back a pace, "the ones I have on—"

But he had put down the glass case and produced an armful of braces from somewhere; these he began to whip round his neck with such rapidity that he appeared to be having a hundred up with a skipping-rope.

"Last week," said a woman's voice in tuba tones, "I brought in a child's coat to have the sleeves shortened." I saw that a tall woman in pony-skin (if ponies grow that size) had stolen up behind me over the thick carpet. "I forgot to say that they were too wide as well," she trumpeted over my head.

"Thirty-four, thirty-five . . ." said the man. The mounting layers of braces were threatening to obscure his face now, and he smoothed them away to the sides with both hands as if they had been some fantastic beard. He paused to make a deft pencil note on the box-lid. "Not a question of preferably, really," he said, beginning to whip braces again. "Thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight . . ."

"The ones I have on," I began again, "are—"

"Too short?"

"No, no, too long," said the woman.

"Too thin," I said.

"And too wide," she said, the pony-skin brushing past me.

"They look all right for width," said the man, prompted by some sixth sense to throw his right hand upwards and backwards at that moment, just too late to prevent a hat-box falling with a crack on to the counter and disgorging a single boldly-designed cap. The man caught up the cap swiftly and put it on, out of his way.

"Vibration," he said.

"Murray," said the woman.

"I am hurrying," he said, lifting off the horse-collar of braces and tying them in a gigantic bow from which I scarcely expected him to emerge in human shape. He threw them under the counter.

"M-U-R-R-A-Y," said the woman. "A little boy's sort of tweedy, heathery sort of coat." She pulled out one or two more stops and couplers. "Too long," she blared. "I—"

"Won't they brace up?" the man said, flickering a glance at my legs and beginning to count a box of socks. "I've got a pair of hop-sack."

"Warm?" I asked.

He blew out his cheeks again.

"I should say so. Steam heating. Called up the boy. Single-handed." He unfastened his waistcoat with a quick disembowelling movement and struck the lid from a second box of socks. He began to count faster than before, as if conscious of having wasted time and breath on his last piece of conversation.

"Haven't you anything thicker?" I asked, overtaking the pony-skin by an elbow and pressing myself against the counter. Then the man performed a most unusual feat. Still counting socks at a tremendous rate, his lips silently forming the numerals, he nevertheless managed to address a quite distinct sentence to another customer who had taken us in the rear. It was a very odd effect, rather like a badly-dubbed foreign film.

"Gone again already, Charlie?" he said, his lips counting somewhere up in the teens, as I judged. I saw that a policeman, small as policemen go, was holding his striped official brassard in one hand and its buckle in the other. The buckle had a strand or two of cotton adhering to it.

"Just this minute," he said. "And I'll take the other, if convenient."

"Nice ties and hankies to match," said the man behind the counter. Still dubbing surprisingly he had raised his voice to reach the ears of a man and a girl who had begun to prowl undecidedly about some of the showcases. "Pyjamas, gowns, gents' underwear; studs, links and armlets in fancy horse-shoe box . . . forty-eight pairs at six-and-three . . ." He jotted down a figure on the lid and descended suddenly out of sight. Presently the top of his head appeared again, and he came up very slowly, apparently straining at something. Then he came fully into view, suddenly, and knocked a second hat-box down with the back of his head. But he was holding a pair of trousers.

"Just for size," he explained, draping them over the arm of the lady in pony-skin.

She stepped at once on the full-organ pedal.

"Now, look here," she began; but I took the trousers from her with a slight bow and made my way to the nearest fitting-room. I could still hear her voice as I put the trousers on.

When I came out again the man behind the counter was standing on a short pair of steps, tapping piles of shirts with a pencil. He selected a pile and brought them down to earth. The policeman, who seemed to be a regular customer with an understanding of the rules of the house, had taken a seat and now watched fascinated, while the man slapped shirts on the counter at a speed suggesting newspapers coming off a rotary press.

"I'll take these," I said; and prepared to wait uncomplainingly.

It wasn't until late that night that I noticed the skilfully-tailored insertion in the left calf of those thick, blue, wind-resisting trousers, as if some previous wearer had been standing too near to an open fire, a brazier, perhaps. Now I understand perfectly why so many policemen wear half their uniform when they are off duty. Exquisite quality rayon with the appearance of fine linen wouldn't be any use to them.

J. B. B.

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Don't Point With Your Mouth Full!

"The Danish slanderers hoped to kill two birds with one stone: firstly, to make out that the Danish Communist Party is acting on orders of Moscow, and secondly, to blacken the Soviet Union. But they bit off more than they could chew."

"New Times," Moscow.



"Watch your dangerous drugs, mister?"

An Innocent at Large

[Mr. Punch's special representative has been spending a few months in America to find out what is really happening there.]

XIII—Romping on the Campus

I AM indebted to an American mother for most of the fact and opinion, errors and omissions excepted, and all of the common sense contained in this article—the padding and any coins you may find down the sides are mine. The American mother's sons are day-students at a Middle Western university, three rosy-cheeked boys hopping about between military training, education for life and young love. They work reasonably hard, wriggle out of about five of their fifteen lectures per week, and spend most of their evenings and early mornings with their "dates."

The university is co-educational and so progressive that girls are no longer barred from active membership of the campus band. But the diehards and reactionaries have not yet given up the struggle. They argue that girls look all wrong in trousers, that "their hair sticks out under their caps," that they are "basically unmusical," "can't march in a straight line" and "cramp the beer-party conversations of male bandsmen." Moreover, every girl admitted to the band displaces a returning veteran and there is such a thing as the G.I. Bill of Rights. But a freshman, Buzz Phillips, says "I don't think it makes any difference—you can't tell them from the men when you're up in the stands."

If you ask me, Buzz is a pretty raw and inexperienced fresher at that.

Of the three rosy-cheeked boys, Don ("Shipwreck") is intramural editor of the campus's weekly newspaper (a very bright newspaper with a circulation much larger than its staff and a handsome revenue from national advertisers), Mickey plays in the college football team and Frankie is engaged to marry Mona Zentgraf of the Alpha Theta Phi sorority.

Frankie's case is typical. He exchanged fraternity pins with Mona three years ago, about twelve months after alighting on the campus from high school. Swapping fraternity pins is like plighting your troth but with less finality. You take the plunge, but the key remains in the



lock of the stable door. (Yes, yes. I know all about that, you purists.) Well, Frankie met her at a dance thrown by his fraternity, Beta Kappa Kappa, dated her and got mentioned in dispatches:

"Frankie O'Connor buzzed up to the ball-game with Mona Zentgraf." And then—

"Dancing and romancing were Mona Zentgraf and Frankie O'Connor." Later—

"Frankie O'Connor didn't see a thing all night except Mona Zentgraf's hair-ribbon."

Mona was an attractive girl with what it takes or all the necessary qualifications. She was pledged to Alpha Theta Phi (a swish fraternity—or rather, sorority—with branches in seventy-nine other universities), a deputy vice-president of the Women's Senate, a member of Mortar Board and assistant secretary of the Social Board and Liberal Arts Tribunal. And, above all, there were her elegant gowns, her eyelashes and her jive. So they got pinned and all other noses and suitors were put out of joint or commission. "After college a girl gets so few chances," said the American mother. "If Mona and Frankie have gotten along without much trouble for three years that's something anyway. I guess they'll make out all right."

The American college girl is a strange creature. She admits quite openly that popularity is her goal and most of her activities on the wings and down the centre lead to the goal-area. She is assessed socially (and nothing else matters *very much*) by the ranking of her sorority and the number and quality of her dates. This fraternity business is puzzling to the outsider. My view is that a fraternity is nothing more than a *très snob* clique or caucus, but I may be wrong. A fresher spends her (or his) first few months on the campus weighing up the chances of election to the various clubs. Then she bungs in her application form. She is examined under a microscope, tested and quizzed. If she is rejected there may still be time for a shot at another sorority lower down the social ladder. But there may be no vacancies anywhere, and a girl without a sorority pin is an untouchable—metaphorically speaking of course. Unfortunately things seem to be so arranged that there are never enough pins to go round, and I am told that the psychiatrists are kept pretty busy attending to the woes and neuroses of the poor wall-flowers. America's boisterously healthy respect for the law of the survival of the fittest leaves the hindmost distressingly numerous in many walks of life.

Mona is not a bobby-soxer (too old for that) and she doesn't like to be called a teen-ager, but she has all the teen-ager's tricks and aptitudes. She wears an astonishing variety of costumes. On the campus her upper half is enveloped in an outsize sweater (or "sloppy joe") and she wears her trousers or jeans rolled up to her knees. It is the fashion of the moment for one cuff (or turn-up) to be slightly higher than the other. With a Veronica Lake hair-do and a few books she contrives to look surprisingly business-like. For her dates Mona becomes a lady of fashion, a dazzling débutante.

Frankie's outfit on the campus is less exciting, decidedly more literary and scholastic. Its chief item is the sweater neatly patterned with block capitals, headlines advertising some of Frankie's many social activities.

Frankie usually looks like a sandwich-man gone flaccid. He wears a Sinatra tie—that is, a bow-tie with the droops or bends—and a pair of checkered trousers, pants or jeans. He will *not* wear a union suit (English pants) until he is old

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PUNCH or *The London Charivari*

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and obese enough to join the Kiwanis, Alpecks, Boneheads or some other great American league of henpecked husbands.

The American mother was as worried as any mother should be whose sons get home habitually with the milkman: but anything in the nature of a protest or reprimand from her would be regarded as spoil-sport and insulting



Ties: On the left, Young America; on the right, Not-so-young America.

to the younger generation. Most nocturnal dates take the young couples to the road-houses where the chief attractions, it is generously supposed, are ice-cold "cokes" (soft drinks), the juke-box and a pocket-handkerchief dance-floor.

(What's that? Where is father all this time? Well, haven't I told you that American society is predominantly patriarchal? The old man is probably over at Hinty's, eating corned beef and cabbage.)

I can say nothing very useful about the intelligence and academic status of the American university student—except that I found both much higher than I had imagined. My stock answer went like this: "Oh, yes, of course, a most brilliant writer (thinker, theory, performance, etc.). A long time, though, since I read him. See, what was his last book . . . ? Yes, of course, quite a *tour de force*, what?" I think I kept our end up. The classroom atmosphere is rather like that of an English teachers' training college—heavy with discipline and fact-finding academics. I caught one pimply youth reading comics under the desk, but he looked pretty foolish, I can tell you, by the time I had finished with him.

This university has a student population of about 14,000. Veterans have returned to the campus and are housed with their wives and children in dozens of little huts not unlike the Portal in outline but smaller and with fewer critics. The ex-G.I. has a very healthy influence. He is earnest and hard-working and the snobbishness of the fraternity clan system cuts little ice with him. Negroes are admitted to the university, but their number is disproportionately small. They are not admitted to white fraternities and are provided with a separate common-room.

Mickey, the second boy, plays football for his college— hauls the pigskin on the gridiron as it were. American college football is officially amateur, but many of the crack maulers are unofficially professional. They are lured to the campus by special scholarships giving them free tuition and keep and (sometimes) a useful honorarium. The brightest stars do even better for themselves. Once you have realized that the spectators are the chief spectacle American football is a grand game to watch. Their vociferous urgings and promptings, their violent partisanship and their amazing capacity for alfresco refreshments are not to be missed. But at this university the eleven is not getting the support it deserves—"Something is

definitely lacking . . . suggestions may be left at the News Office and anyone with new ideas is urged to attend cheer-leading practices, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12.30 P.M." I saw nothing to complain about. The march of time has seen many changes in cheer-leading, I am told. Not so long ago women were barred from the job. Then they were admitted under a "No-can-wear-pants-must-wear-corset" ruling. And to-day they wear just what they darn well like.

If your eye strays to the game it should not follow the ball as in soccer or Rugger, but should feast on the many fierce duels which accompany every two- or three-yard rush. The players are dressed like mediæval knights, but the chivalry is entirely different. After the game more refreshments are served in the union, which is splendidly equipped with a cafeteria, a restaurant and numerous coffee-rooms and tea-shops. The juke-boxes give out hot rhythm as a background to a rowdy post-mortem.

Now that winter has at last caught up with me I have had the time and the inclination to listen at some length to American radio entertainment. Prepared for miracles I listened the other Sunday afternoon to the celebrated "Quiz Kids." I regret to say that I found them tedious and precocious. Perhaps they had an off day. But then, I find most American children a little too smart for my comfort, a little too worldly-wise and sophisticated. The little boys are out of short pants (and into long ones of course) almost as soon as they can lisp. And little girls seem to jump into their teens right from their seventh or eighth birthday party. The real trouble, I suppose, is that American children are such clever mimics, and that I am disturbed and distressed by the image in my mirror.

American fathers on the other hand seem to retain their boyishness much longer than the British male species. Their clothes are dashing and colourful—brilliant, flamboyant ties, wasp-waisted coats, ten-gallon stetsons. They devour their comics or "funnies" (which are chiefly concerned with the feats of supermen and cowboy heroes) with pop-eyed relish. They eat, drink and chew with a youthful exuberance and lack of discretion, play the pin-tables and slot-machines for dear life and display the keenest enthusiasm for any mechanical contrivance or gadget. Waiting for the diesel-engined "Diplomat" on the Baltimore-Ohio Railroad the other night I was amazed at the antics of my host. He stuffed innumerable cent pieces into a gum-machine and danced with delight at the



gruff blast of the approaching train. "Gosh, these kids get a hellaver kick outa the railroad, don't they!" he said, looking admiringly at his ten-years-old son. And when he placed a penny on the line in the path of the advancing express he could hardly contain his excitement.

The boy looked at me rather sheepishly. HOD.

American Commentary

III

GOOD evening. I doubt if anything has struck the post-election consciousness of the ordinary citizen over here with as much force as the news, which struck it Friday, that General McNertz is cutting short his goodwill tour in South Amnesia. Now you may reasonably feel, as indeed many people do here, that just at present South Amnesia could use any spare goodwill there may be around; and it is of course fully possible that the General is simply calling back for more. I should perhaps remind you of the view expressed in this connection by Senator Brickenbacker of Hideho, to the effect that—I quote—"if and when this country needs friends in the South Pacific, the North Atlantic will be a fine place for Ed McNertz"; and there seems indeed little doubt that the President too will be pleased to have the General home. Otherwise, one may as well admit that few if any foreseeable developments will be pleasing the President much from now on, since even should Congress ratify the Wagtail clause on food shipments this will most probably cut the ground from under temporary housing, whilst if they throw it out at this stage it will hit the small investor. Significantly, perhaps, the long-term question-mark that is causing most mid-reconversion goose-pimples down in Washington as I speak to you is whether, and for how

long, pressure on prices can continue being absorbed through the investment pipeline without trade expansion pushing food exporters off the dollar exchange-rate; and it is no longer any secret that the reason top union spokesmen have been digging their toes in on synthetic rubber is because they themselves might easily get pushed off next. Yet the fact remains that at no time since the Associated Fretworkers left the Amalgamated Shiftworkers had labour been showing such nation-wide willingness to play ball with managements as it had before Secretary Hayride's precedent-making speech at Teapot, Minnewattee—the one, by the way, that sent stock prices into a by ordinary standards wild-cat tail-spin with the disclosure that the White House did not know what could be blocking the pipeline now unless it was Senator Brickenbacker. Those of you who saw the speech will, I suspect, have wondered just why it made stocks like, say, the Antelope, Bazooka and Santa Claus Railroad—to name only one—jump three points before nose-diving clear down to something like a pre-Pearl Harbour price-level; and I will not try to indicate reasons now beyond pointing out that the President has called in ex-Governor Jerkwell to help hold off consumer attacks on price-policy, and yesterday issued a straight warning that pretty soon he may call in the Amalgamated

Shiftworkers. In other words, there are now distinct signs that what is called a "bear-garden" may be developing on Wall Street, with all this would imply for the prospects of a standstill settlement on sit-down strikes and an early all-round share-out of nuclear know-how. What is in a long-term sense even more significant, addressing a reputedly biggest-ever Leave-It-To-Jerkwell meeting this week at Truculence, Neuralgia, Senator Brickenbacker challenged any cabinet member to tell him out loud—first, did the White House see the Hayride speech; second, did it read it; and third, who said we had to share the know-how anyhow. This was of course just another way of saying that unless the President swings still further left-of-centre by soft-pedalling grain stocks he may end up leaning so hard on wage-agreements that he brings down the price-structure set up at Gumtree Meadows. Now, in theory, Congress would then have to write a clause into the Doghouse Act pegging down prices and tying up grain stocks, or else take controls off synthetic rubber and put them on Secretary Hayride; though it is pretty generally admitted that the administration is prepared to go into temporary housing on a big scale if, as seems likely, pro-Hayride feeling blows the lid off food-shipments, and that in fact the President favours going in right now. For the time being, however, the President is clearly trying hard to climb on the back-to-toughness band-waggon and pin the "un-American" label on Secretary Hayride; the vice-chairman of General Meatballs has meanwhile jumped existing controls and is swinging on the price-structure; and the Senate Committee on bank deposits have written a rude clause into the Doghouse Act, put the Jerkwell program in reverse, and gone on a post-election spending spree. It is therefore fair to say that it is maybe too early yet to forecast what you can expect in next week's American Commentary. Good night.

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H'm

"Nottingham is not shrinking from the fray. Mr. T. Winship, manager of the Palais de Danse, where the local teams are chosen, told me: 'If the Leicestershire girls care to come to Nottingham we shall welcome them with open arms and beat them soundly.'"

"*Nottingham Evening News.*"



The Conductress Muses.

ON the early spell
From the minute I ring the bell
And we slip away
On the first trip of the day
It's the smell of WORK—
Workaday clothes,
Swarf and grease,
And the steely smell
That clings to the clothes of the men who set
The wheels of the world to work,
And fags and macks and a whiff of twist
And the smell of frost or morning mist.

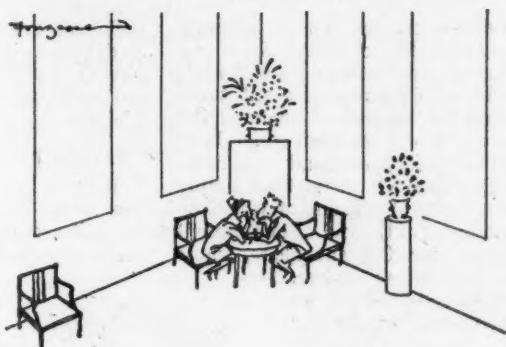
An hour or two later,
Say about eight or nine,
The school-kids come,
Smelling pleasantly clean and scrubbed,
Not yet rubbed and grubby with ink
Or sticky with sweets—
Girls in print
And boys in blazers
Bringing a scent of books and pencils
In from the freshening streets.

About eleven o'clock I find
The smells have become refined.
The ladies are doing their shopping now—
Not the Mums with the bulging bags,
Stuffed with spuds and a couple of kippers
For the old man's tea, but the "better-to-do,"
With fresh-ground coffee in pretty baskets,
And a bunch of daffs, perhaps,
Or a piece of expensive and smelly cheese
Wrapped in a neat brown paper parcel;
A fancy smell, of toilet soap,
Leather handbags, good kid gloves and furs.

When it's the later shift I'm on
It starts with the school-kids going home,
Inky and chalky, tired and obstropolous—
You know the smell of a grubby boy!
Like as not with a bag of roast potatoes—
The young Turks! Littering up my floor!
Then the fags and the macks and the twist come back
And it's workaday world for an hour or two.
On the evening trips we get the youngsters
Off to the flicks or a dance at the Palais—
Smell like a blinking beauty parlour,
What with the powder, scent and lipstick,
And the young lads shiny with soap and hair-oil—
Oh, well, bless 'em! They earn their fun.

Later still, when the pubs turn out
And it's "On top only! That's enough now!
Pass right down inside!"
The smell is a grand old stand-up double
Between the baccy and the beer and chips
And a proper fug it is.
But I don't trouble—
The day's near done,
Two more trips then back to the depot,
And after that straight home to supper,
A good sit down
And a lovely copper tea—
Best smell of the day to me!

PSYCHOLOGICAL PUZZLE.



Here we see two ladies exchanging confidences in the very far corner of a very large and very empty hotel lounge—



and here we see the same two ladies exchanging the same sort of confidences in a crowded Tube train.

At the Play

"PACIFIC 1860" (DRURY LANE)

THIS operette has not the urgently romantic quality of *Bitter Sweet* nor the same power to move us, and while it is full of light and pleasant tunes they lack the immediate magnetism of some of Mr. NOEL COWARD's best. Yet in its gaiety, grace and continuous appeal to the eye there is a tonic supply of many of the vitamins of which we are most starved. And of our present dramatists Mr. COWARD alone, whose all-in talents as writer, composer and producer we are too apt to take for granted, could have achieved its unity and polish.

In a South Sea island he has found a background almost as colourful as Vienna, and in the sticky code of its British society a formula which fits his story of a visiting prima donna who falls in love with the cadet of a big plantation, is bullied into putting her art first and in the end of course is guided by her own instinct. It is a very slight plot with no more than an indifferent twist in its tail, but it serves to provide a rapid succession of passable, if never vastly dramatic, situations, the most effective of which is a lingering kiss before a goggling drawing-room and the bulging eyes of a governor-general. I thought the only bad scene was the lovers' farewell, conducted between a quay-

side and a rapidly disappearing poop. Real steam may be fun and in the Lane tradition, but the set is like a magazine cover and the sentiments all the way from Hollywood. A refreshing proportion of the cast can really sing and act. Miss MARY MARTIN, from America, has everything needed for the lead—voice, comedy, delicacy of touch, looks and youth. An honest soul shouted from the gallery "You're grand!" and said it for us. Mr. GRAHAM PAYN plays opposite her with engaging manners and dexterity, Miss SYLVIA CECIL sings very well as the *Duenna*, Mr. CARL JAFFE makes an imposing *Impresario* and a whole bevy of youngsters acquit themselves bravely. Of the songs the most stirring is a stick of native dynamite, "Fumfumbolo,"

the most clinging "This Is a Night For Lovers," the wittiest "I Wish I Wasn't Quite Such a Big Girl," capitally delivered by Miss DAPHNE ANDERSON. MANTOVANI and his orchestra are from the top drawer. And lastly, as we hoped she would, Mrs. G. E. CALTHROP treats us to the prettiest dresses we have seen since the war.

"BETWEEN OURSELVES" (PLAYHOUSE)

MAINLY by Mr. ERIC MASCHWITZ, this revue has a welcome emphasis on ballet and presentation, which is not surprising seeing that Mr. HEDLEY



BETWEEN THEMSELVES

(Quick impression of a spy's love-nest.)

BRIGGS directed it, and it can boast a greater pressure of ideas than most of its kind. Yet I came away wondering why so much promising material had not amounted to more. Where it fails is that many of its happiest notions spend themselves inconclusively; where it is strongest is in individual turns. A fair instance of how it throws away a flying start is the burlesque on Secret Service romances, where a be-ootiful spy in a sponsored love-nest makes elaborate preparations to receive a visitor from M.I. 4-30 (a reflection on earlier closing at the War Office which is rather a pretty jest); it opens exceedingly well but the climax sticks out a mile. Much the funniest of the combined operations shows four very heavy dragoons lamenting (in a large

picture frame) the unspeakable occasion when a lady's name was mentioned in the mess. Mr. GEORGE BENSON, Mr. GORDON LITTLE, Mr. WALLAS EATON and Mr. BILL FRASER put this over superbly. The runner-up, I think, is a rag by Mr. DENIS WALDOCK on factory intellectuals, in which Mr. BILL FRASER shines as a hand debauched by Dostoevsky.

That good actress, Miss BERYL MEASOR, is not intelligently employed, nor has Miss ZOE GAIL much opportunity. Mr. GEORGE BENSON has the pick of the solos and well deserves it, for he is an original comedian who uses his brain all the time.

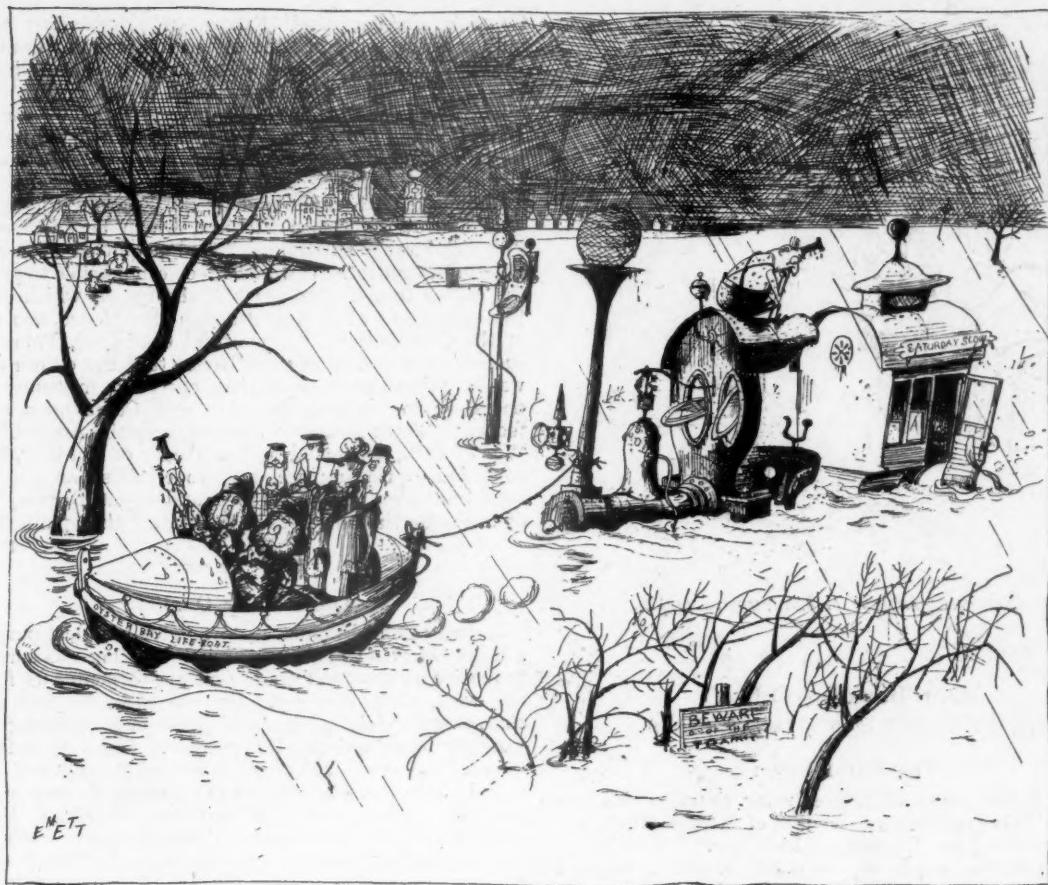
In a monologue called *Rehearsal for Speech Day* he takes off beautifully the pangs of a distinguished Old Boy trying out on his study furniture the hallowed clichés to which he is about to subject his school. It is an acute piece of satire which gets home neatly. And he is also very funny as a professor of tattoo who has put all he knows on to a lady client, but has lost his heart in the process. Miss BETTY ANN DAVIES scores in an acid monologue at a telephone, by Miss DOROTHY PARKER, and she has a crisp bit of Victorian nonsense about fish. The extraordinary ruling governing nudity on the English stage is neatly treated by Mr. BILL FRASER. Of the scenic pieces the most effective shows Primavera and Co. descending from a vernal still-life to celebrate spring in the park. Mr. NORMAN

HACKFORTH has written some fair tunes. As for the song about the Left Honourables, it misses fire completely, and this is not the fault of the Lord Chamberlain, about whose lopping and pruning there has been such a to-do. Any split in the Labour Party between the Wykehamists and the Brixtonists is fair game, but so far for bite and clean fun the House of Commons easily has it. ERIC.

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"Russia and Britain voted for the resolution, and Britain and the U.S.A. against."—*Indian paper*.

Then Britain exercised her casting vote and Britain walked out in a huff.



"I said, that's the proper place for 'im. After all, 'e's the captain, in a manner of speaking."

Notice to Boys

THE inspectors have sent a letter to the Governors which says that if the school is being closed down and turned into a factory, that is no call for boys presuming that it makes them all factory managers with the right to put up notices telling the employees what not to do and where. Some of these writings do not say much for the brains of our youth after training in our schools.

We showed H.M. Inspector what had been put up over the sinks about it being the glue department and work-people should not bathe there, and he was puzzled if not disgusted. Then they do the opposite with the drinking fountain and say it is not suitable for washing hands, feet or overalls. This is nothing to the impractical way they have planned out the factory in chalk all over the big hall and down into the caretaker's cellar which they call the

loft. The prospective factory owner came and looked these over to see if they would save an architect, but he says he is making hard toys and not silly ones. He does not need a Shaving Room for trimming golliwogs into picaninny, a yawning room for stretching crazy-crocodiles' jaws, nor a hydrating room for testing bubbles before de-hydrating them back into bubble-mixture. Then the various factory officials picked out for shutting up in hermitically sealed offices exceed all the bounds of officialdom. For instance, a finger-nail inspector to see that work-people do not go home with the firm's modelling clay would not be economic, while a putty-upper to help the draughtsmen by sealing all the cracks in the building is again a good thought gone wrong. The biggest blunder of all is a maze-shaped room for losing the right pieces of jig-saws

in. To correct all these wrong ideas the new owner will arrange to invite boys round his place when converted, so that if he employs any of them they will not compel him to turn it back into a school again.

Mr. Tingle endorses all this.
J. TINGLE, Governing Inspector.

To K. C. R.

THE testament of tears at last
Is written, blotted and made fast.
Not to be touched by any hand
Not even mine. You understand.
Until in sunlight from above
I open it and read our love—
Kiss it, and lay it back myself
Upon the gently-dusted shelf—
And then go out into the air,
Serene at heart to leave it there.



"You know what happens to bad-tempered people!"

Our Booking Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The Rural Reign

WHAT is the secret of the enduring charm which has made the village of Selborne a place of literary pilgrimage for the whole of the English-speaking world? This is one of the questions which Mr. WALTER S. SCOTT has set himself to answer in an admirably produced and attractively illustrated volume on *White of Selborne and His Times* (WESTHOUSE, £1 1s.), and he deserves our sincere thanks for providing a full-length portrait of its subject in a more readable and compact form than that afforded by most of the unduly weighty and discursive tomes previously written on the same theme. White shared one outstanding quality with two such widely different people as Cobbett and Lamb, both of whom would probably have been *anathema maranatha* to him and to each other. That quality was his essential English-ness, as characteristic of him as of the gentle Hampshire landscape of farmland and chalk down, copse and garden, stream and woodland, among which the greater part of his life was passed; and it is attractively brought out in Mr. SCOTT's sympathetic study. His childhood and youth, his life at Oxford, his friendships and foibles, his kindness and hospitality, and needless to say, his enthusiastic interest in the varied matters that then went to make up the daily life of the country-dweller, all find a place in these pleasant and informative pages, and the result is a book which forms at once a charming commentary on, and a helpful companion to, the "Natural History of Selborne" itself. C. F. S.

England and the Opium Trade

It is a great pleasure, with so much slipshod, shapeless, over-dramatized and under-meditated writing ceaselessly pouring forth, to come upon such an excellent narrative,

clear, humorous and well-balanced, as Mr. MAURICE COLLIS's *Foreign Mud* (FABER, 21/-), described by its author as the story of "the opium imbroglio at Canton in the 1830's and the Anglo-Chinese War that followed." Mr. COLLIS begins with an account of the origins of the opium traffic with China. It was promoted by the East India Company to set the China trade on a sound financial basis, and would not have come into existence had the Chinese freely opened their ports to the Europeans. Lin, a Chinese official empowered by the Emperor to stop this traffic, wrote to Queen Victoria, whom he addressed as "an honourable chieftainess" and acquitted of personal guilt in the matter. It would have been possible to prevent the sailing from Indian ports of the vessels which carried the opium to China, but although this course was urged in the Commons by the youthful Gladstone, Palmerston succeeded in convincing the House that the opium traffic was a minor issue, and that energetic measures were necessary to put English trade with China on a proper footing. These measures were taken in the Anglo-Chinese War of 1840, concluded by the Treaty of Nanking, which conceded everything necessary to establish an open and legal commerce between China and Great Britain, while at the same time immensely facilitating the opium traffic.

H. K.

Quantity or Quality?

A needy Englishwoman restoring, for practical purposes, a fragment of an historical French building was surprised to receive an ovation from her master-carpenter for having the work done properly. He was sick, he said, of *le ciment et le contre-plaqué*, of good men debasing their work for mean and tasteless patrons. Our own craftsmen—such as remain—are of the same mind; and how much sound craftsmanship still awaits discerning employment you can gather from Mr. NORMAN WYMER'S *English Country Crafts* (BATSFORD, 12/6). Country crafts, he insists, rise and fall with agriculture; and country craftsmen are—or should be—the village. There are, of course, city crafts; but they do not figure among his chosen sixty. The sixty still flourish—some locally, like Collyweston slates, Sussex trugs and Honiton lace. Others, like the work of the country builder, are found everywhere with local variations. Each craft's processes are individually described, with excellent illustrations. The author, however, while taking an apprehensive view of mass-production, has not gone very deeply into its causes or its cures. He should face the difficulty of combining education with any real apprenticeship to a craft; and he should note that you cannot assuage a blacksmith's lot by giving him an acetylene welding-plant and letting his own fire die out.

H. P. E.

An English Village

Brensham Village (COLLINS, 12/6) is a companion volume to *Portrait of Elmbury*, in which Mr. JOHN MOORE described a West-Country market town in the period between the two wars. It is all to the good that the late war should have made Englishmen conscious of their own country, but whether this consciousness will begin to flag if the present fashion of rural panoramas persists much longer is a question perhaps worth pondering. Meanwhile those whose appetite for rustic detail is unsated will find much to their taste in this book, which is clearly inspired by a genuine and unflagging love for the scenes and people it depicts. As an example of the author's method one may take the section entitled "The Cricket-Ground," which opens with

a description of the cricket-field in spring, the first cuckoo calling from an adjacent meadow, the apple-blossom coming out, and the willows putting on their young green. "And how white in the spring sunshine were the flannels well-cresed after months in bottom-drawers, the umpires' coats, the new blanco'd pads and cricket-boots!" From the lean-to hut behind the pavilion comes a clatter of plates—"the Helpers were already preparing the tea." But there is shade as well as light in the author's picture of Brensham. There is a soulless syndicate which stretches its tentacles over the village; there is an invasion of Oxford Groupers, assisted by a quisling rector and his proselytizing young wife; and there is a bomb. But Brensham emerges in the end unchanged.

H. K.

Wine Without Tears

You didn't know that flowers of wormwood and elder, angelica root, quinine bark, nutmeg, coriander, cinnamon, hyssop, sweet marjoram, cloves, camomile, bitter orange peel, centaury, gentian, linden tea and at least twenty-five other plants, roots, leaves, peels, seeds and flowers go to turning white wine into French vermouth? That for three happy centuries after Eleanor of Aquitaine married Henry II Bordeaux belonged to us? That before the war Rumania ranked fourth among the wine-producing countries of Europe? Or that the best Madeira has always been found in the United States? Don't despair. Such ragged gaps in your education can easily be filled from Mr. ANDRÉ SIMON's *A Wine Primer* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 6/-), which is a mine of agreeable information. He has written it specially for the beginner, giving concisely the basic facts about most of the known vintages of the world. So wide a survey leaves little room for those scholarly discourses on the aesthetics of great wines at which he excels, but in spite of its compression the book will be read with pleasure by initiates as well as tyros. Only once does he puzzle, when he insists without qualification on the cheapness and abundance of wine. This seems scarcely the moment for such a claim, with our import duties at seventeen shillings a gallon even on beverage wines in cask and with Frenchmen paying about a pound a bottle at the Hospice de Beaune for no more than reasonable Burgundy. It will surely be a very long time before we get back, if ever we do, to the prices of '39. What a pity we lost Bordeaux! E. O. D. K.

The Power of the Film

MISS MARGARET FARRAND THORP's *America at the Movies* (FABER, 12/6) is what the British editor, Mr. J. P. Mayer, rather forbiddingly calls "an important contribution towards the sociology of film"; but it is so packed with picturesque and odd facts by way of illustration that not even the light-minded reader can fail to find it amusing. It is a survey, written in the United States before the war but almost as true for this country now, of the ways in which films influence society and the ways in which society reacts on the making of films. They influence fashion, modes of thought, moral judgments, behaviour; particularly of course among the young ("Any mother puzzled by the behaviour of a youthful son or daughter would do well to study the star whose pictures they are most eager to see"); they have a tremendous effect on the reading and buying of books, old and new ("More copies of *Wuthering Heights* have been sold since the novel was screened than in all the previous ninety-two years of its existence"); in the technique of fiction-writing as of play-writing they are responsible for radical innovations; and as for art, it is

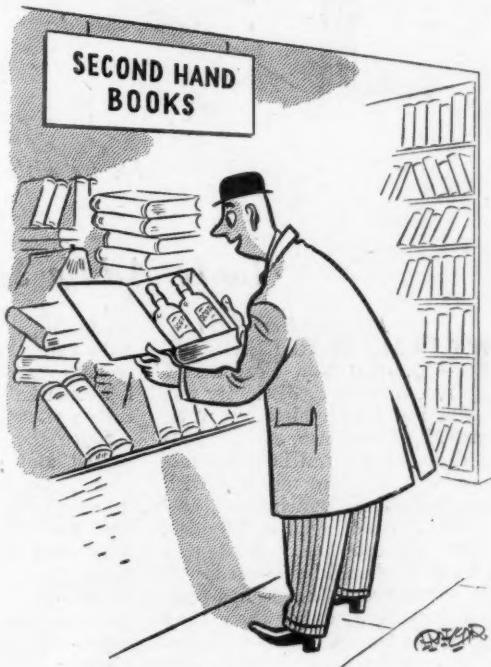
perfectly arguable that "anyone who goes often to the movies must have unconsciously acquired some knowledge of the elements of composition." In all these departments, to be sure, they mislead as often as they enlighten; and what emerges as strongly as anything about the average moviegoer's influence on the movies is that they mislead him because he makes it very clear in one way and another that he likes to be misled. For the conscientious student of society, then, the book carries no cheerful message; but for the general reader it is full of entertainment and stimulation.

R. M.

Shadows of the Stage

The names Georgina Dempster and Grania Summet are not really very much alike, but when they belong, as they do in Miss RACHEL FERGUSON's book, *A Stroll Before Sunset* (CAPE, 9/6), to two elderly actresses who are devoted friends and jealous rivals and who have each, so to speak, one foot off the stage, one has to do a good deal of to-and-froing through the first rambling chapters to sort t'other from which. Carry Blare, the rorty full-blooded old-stager, is far more easily placed and much more likeable; for the smooth battling of the other two, with their schools of drama and their memoirs, does become a little boring, though they are amusingly described. A great many other people move, more or less convincingly, through the book, but it is a bit difficult to believe in Lionel Dalton, who played with a doll in the nursery, was under shadows at school, fought shy of marriage, ended up in the river—and all because his parents would rather have had a girl for their third child. The story of the young playwright and all the vicissitudes of his play rings far more true and reads more easily, and one would have liked a great deal more about the indomitable Carry. All the same Miss FERGUSON's book is good entertainment.

B. E. B.





"Do we wish to let our house, dear?"

Lady Addle Sees the New Year in.

Bengers, Herts, 1947
MY DEAR, DEAR READERS,—The first New Year that I remember very distinctly was soon after my fourth birthday when my sister Mipsie was two, and her god-father, dear old Admiral Lord Doomsday, came into the nursery with a beautiful silver punch-bowl and ladle, and insisted, against Nannie's indignant protests, that his god-daughter's lips should be touched with punch, as the French kings' lips were touched with burgundy when they were born, in the olden days. What was everyone's surprise when the

infant Mipsie seized the ladle in her baby hands and drained it at one gulp, spilling scarcely a drop, which shows her remarkable intelligence at such an early age.

Since then many new years have passed and as many changes taken place. Perhaps we Coots were unusual in our special adherence to tradition, for I never remember a New Year's Eve when "Auld Lang Syne" was not sung, or a first of Januay when we did not wish everyone, even the servants, a happy New Year. Further back other family customs are recorded. The sixth Earl used to shut

his wife, as representing the old year, out of the drawing-room for an hour, and let in instead the youngest dairy-maid in his employ, as typifying the coming year. My grandfather, whom I just remember, always celebrated New Year's Eve by drinking a glass of a different vintage wine for each month of the year. I still recollect his saying in his cheery voice, "Down goes January" and "Away with February," etc. But when he came to the later months he seemed to drink more silently, I noticed. Perhaps his mind was occupied with serious thoughts as befitting the passing of the old year?

January 1 1947

PUNCH or *The London Charivari*

25

Anyway, I was always sent out of the dining-room before "December"—I don't know why.

Of course Mipsie should have written this article, for her experiences have been so much wider than mine. She has seen the old year out in many places, in a rajah's hunting-box, in a miners' dance club (diamond miners), on a camel, on a surf-board, and so on. She has made many good resolutions and often kept to them, from turning over a new husband to cutting down expenditure, for she is of course somewhat extravagant. But she tells me that whenever she has formed that solemn vow she has made it a point of honour, in the year following, to find someone else to foot her expenses. Perhaps the most curious experience she ever had, however, was when staying in Ireland, with our distant cousins, Lord and Lady Ardluck, of Ballyshame Castle, whom I have mentioned before. In that Fey and enchanted country many strange superstitions persist, not all mere fancies either, as the following story will show.

Mipsie had read somewhere of a legend of Ballyshame to the effect that any jewel placed on the hearth-rug on New Year's Eve would, if the lights were extinguished, be borrowed by the fairies for their midnight festivities. All my sister's romantic nature was kindled by this whimsy and she begged the Ardlucks to try out the legend. Accordingly, at midnight, Lady Ardluck placed a beautiful emerald ring on the rug and the lights were put out. Sure enough, when they were lit again the ring was gone! Now comes the curious part. The myth held, apparently, that the most valuable possession of the family must be placed in the same spot as a receptacle for the return of the jewel. So the famous Ardluck gold tazza was put there and the lamps turned down again. But something must have displeased the Little People, for the lights a few minutes later showed that the beautiful heirloom was gone as well! It was never seen again, alas, though oddly enough an exact replica of it was soon after sold at Christerby's. These things are certainly very hard to explain.

During the war we were all of us too tired, I think, to sit up till midnight. Besides, as regards Bengers, it was impossible to tell the exact time, as our clock-winder was dead and the church bell-ringer in the Home Guard, so there was only the wireless, which Addle seems to think is too modern an invention to be depended on as yet. Indeed, except for the fat-stock prices, he will seldom consent to listen to it at all.

But this year somehow I felt we should mark the occasion by seeing the New Year in. Mipsie had asked us all over to some rich friends of hers; the Mungoes, who live a few miles away, but Addle, who had once shot with Mr. Mungo, said he could not be a gentleman because he heard him apologize to his dog after stepping on her paw, and was not keen to go. So I prepared for an evening at home, making a splendid substitute for punch out of cider, ginger wine and a little Australian port. To my surprise, though, when I took it in to my husband to taste, he suddenly changed his mind and said he thought it would be nice to go to the party after all.

And how we enjoyed ourselves! Neither of us remember much about the evening at all—I fear our memories must be getting rusty—beyond the first delicious drink which our host said was just ice, with a little champagne

and medicinal brandy. All I know is that everyone seemed kind and delightful, more and more so as the evening proceeded, and that when I clasped hands at midnight with two somewhat red-faced men with loud voices, whom I should never have dreamed of calling on in the old days, I decided that human nature was very beautiful, and my resolution for the coming year was to go to more parties where such charming people were to be found. To-day we are none the worse, except for a slight stiffness on my part from learning a new folk-dance called, apparently, the Oogy-Boogy, while Addle has a nasty bruise from getting wedged in a wardrobe while playing hide-and-seek. But what do these small things matter if, as Mipsie describes it, "they are all taken with the right spirit"? And that, at the conclusion of these memoirs, is my wish for my dear, dear readers for 1947. M. D.



Touch and Go

DO you think keeping touch is the most interesting part of Rugger, or do you wonder why anybody ever becomes a touch-judge at all? And why, having done so, he is so scared that somebody else will turn up a bit earlier, grab the flag from the changing-room, and walk off with it, whistling?

"Oh," he will say, rather funnily, "were you going to touch-judge to-day, old man?" The other will look surprised: "I will—if you like, unless you want to." As it is obvious they both want to very badly indeed, one will eventually have to say: "All right, old boy, you do it then." And will show by the way he walks off what he thinks of such selfishness in a grown-up man of his age.

Sometimes, to save all this squabbling, touch is taken by the secretary, who combines it with checking gate-money, and handing out tea-tickets. Sometimes it is taken by last year's captain as a kind of sop for not being this year's. The only other fellow with any traditional right to do it is a member of the First XV who has been crocked, and indicates in this way that he has not been dropped to the "A."

Of course there is nothing in actually *taking* the flag. All you do is to run up and down the touch-line with it, some distance behind the play, so that you have to be shown by steaming forwards where the ball went out. All that remains is to indicate which side should throw it in. You are promptly corrected by the players, get flustered, and then find the

referee is in any case waiting for a scrum because there had been a knock-on long before.

You stand behind the posts when a kick is being taken at goal. Generally you are talking to somebody in the crowd whose wife you like when preparations for this kick are being made. After a lot of whistling and chattering from the other side of the ground you run in embarrassment to your duties, holding your coat together with one hand, money and keys dropping out of your pockets all the way, and wondering if you will have time to look for them on the way back.

If your side are taking the kick, and it is a goal, you hold your flag as high as you possibly can, so that all the chaps in the club can see you. If the other side are taking the kick you look at the other touch-judge, suggesting that he dare not put up his flag without your consent. If it is nothing like a goal you both wave your flags contemptuously in front of you, like the wash-out sign on the rifle range, and walk off with a great deal of unnecessary vanity.

It is certainly true that taking touch enables you to walk on to the field at half-time, with hands in your pockets and the flag under your arm; but the players only walk away sucking lemons as you arrive, in case you are going to offer suggestions. Some people actually regard touch-judging as exercise, change with the team, and have a bath afterwards.

These people are seen doubling out behind the team like p.t. instructors,

in blazers and well-ironed shorts. The flag is carried neatly at the trail. Having taken up their positions on the halfway line they stand smartly at ease with hands behind their backs, chins out, and stomachs in, waiting for the kick-off. This is the only time they are in the right place.

Afterwards they are merely supporters with a better view than anybody else, and the flag is used only to thrash the grass in the event of bad play by their own side, or to cheer with it if one of their side scores.

Everyone has seen a touch-judge holding his flag as high as he can get it and jumping about while the game goes on regardless, with people selling dummies, cutting out dream openings, passing, running, and making demonstration tackles, until some silly little man in the crowd attracts the attention of the referee by pointing gravely with his pipe. Then everyone has to go back, like people who are told that one of their children has fallen off the tram.

I even remember one touch-judge who did this, and to whom the referee, returning vexedly, said "Well—what is the trouble, sir?"

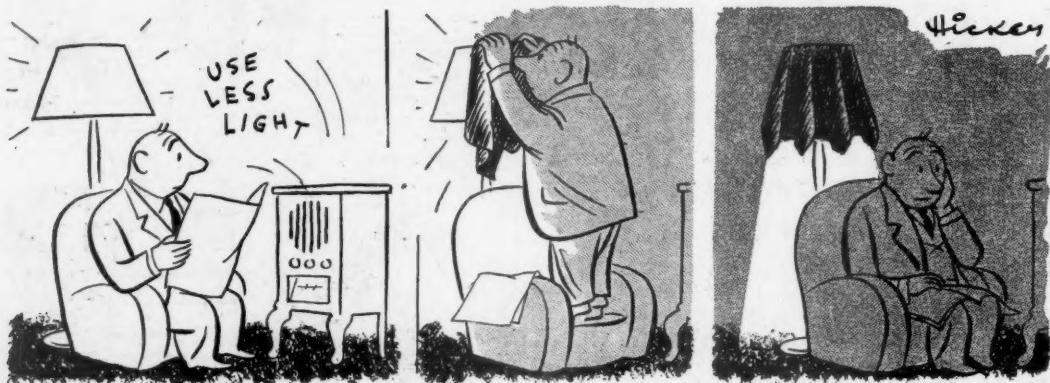
"Touch," said the other. "Here."

"I saw your signal, but," said the referee, "I over-ruled you. Play will continue," he concluded, "there."

Everyone went back to the place they had reached, and the silly little man with the pipe made his only comment.

"Quite right," he said. "Silly fool."

That was the last time I ever took the flag.



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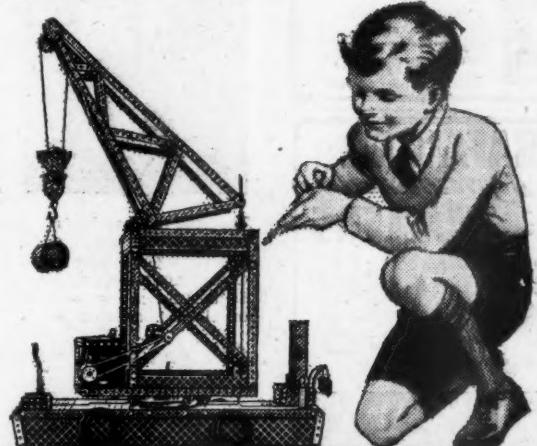
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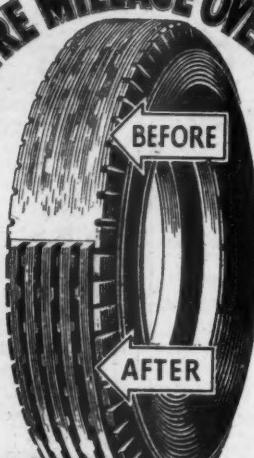
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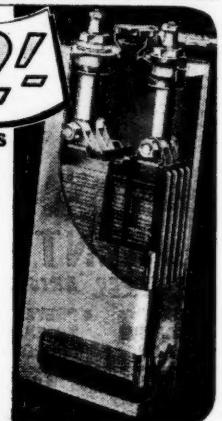
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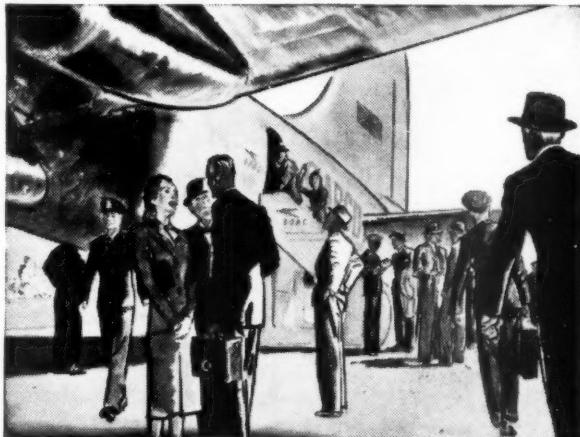


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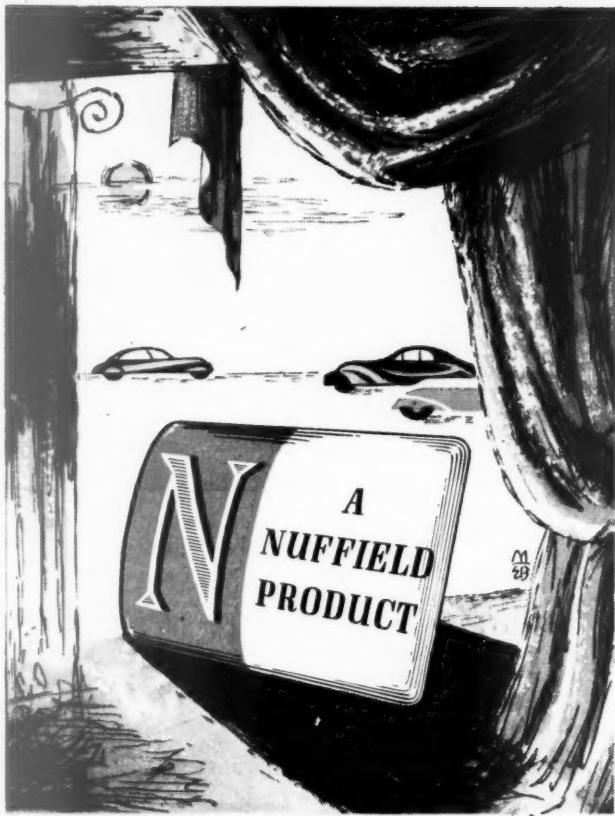
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